



August 2018

NDVS Veterans Voice Newsletter

Message from the Director

Greetings and happy dog days of summer!

If you're a veteran who honorably served your country, the Nevada Department of Veterans Services has made it a top priority to ensure you are recognized and honored.

As the autumn months approach, the calendar will be packed with events and ceremonies designed to do just that: honor each and every veteran and each and every generation of veteran.

One of the first events I would encourage you to attend is the unveiling of the U.S.S. Corvina (SS 226) Submarine Model on August 6, 2018 at 10:00 AM. The event will be held inside the Nevada State Library and Archives building located at 100 North Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada. The date is significant as the USS Corvina was commissioned August 6, 1943 following her launch earlier that year in May.

Sadly, the U.S.S. Corvina was the only American submarine to be sunk by a Japanese submarine during WWII. This submarine model unveiling remembers and honors her loss of 82 crew members. Thanks to the diligence and efforts of the United States Submarine Veterans, Corvina Base, Sparks, the Corvina submarine model will be taken from storage in a garage, to a public setting. The display will serve to educate and keep alive the memory and sacrifices of those serving in WWII.

In November, there will be two other very significant events. On November 9, Battle Born: Memorial to Nevada's Fallen Military will be dedicated. The reception will be at 9:00 AM with the ceremony starting at 10:00 AM at the Nevada State Archives and Library Building, located at 100 North Stewart Street in Carson City. (Yes, it is the same address as above!)

We could use your help locating Nevada families who have had loved ones killed in combat. We want to make sure we invite *immediate family members. We also want to provide travel assistance or reimbursement to eligible family members. (*Immediate family members would include a spouse, brother, sister, son, or daughter.) For more information on eligibility or the event, contact David Johnson at johnsond@veterans.nv.gov .

The second event is a commemoration of WWI. The day-long event will be held at the Nevada State Veterans Home on Veterans Day, November 11, 2018. The home is located at 100 Veterans Memorial Drive in Boulder City. The event starts at 9:00 AM with a book signing by New York Times Best Selling author, Patrick O'Donnell. He will be autographing his book, "The Unknowns: The Untold Story of America's Unknown Soldier and WWI's Most Decorated Heroes Who Brought Him Home." The commemoration ceremony will begin at 1:30 PM in front of the home. The day will also include a keepsake program with your own commemoration WWI pin. There will also be WWI memorabilia displays, a "cantina" serving refreshments, WWI costumes and period music, along with special entertainment and other surprises.

Finally, honoring and remembering every veteran of every generation includes serving those who have served us. That is why we continue to host free workshops designed to train Nevada Veterans Advocates (NVAs). These volunteers help connect veterans and their families to earned benefits, programs and resources. The next free NVA workshop is set for October 20 and 21 at the Red Lion Hotel Casino in Elko. The two-day event will be held both days from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. The address of the venue is 2065 Idaho Street, Elko, Nevada. To save your seat, you may register here: <http://bit.ly/2NnXQZ3>. We are eager to serve northern Nevada veterans with the long-awaited and greatly anticipated Northern Nevada State Veterans Home in Sparks. The ribbon-cutting ceremony is set for December 17 at 5:30 PM. (Yes, it will be an evening affair with dressy attire, if you so desire!) The address is 36 Battle Born Way, Sparks, Nevada. (It is near the intersection of Galetti and Kietzke, behind Lake's Crossing.)

As you can see, the calendar is full in the weeks and months ahead. Whether you served in combat, provided support, served in the Cold War, during a time of restless peace, you signed your name on the dotted line. Your commitment and selfless sacrifice are greatly appreciated. We remain committed to honoring and recognizing each and every one of you!

Respectfully,
Kat Miller

Honoring Nevada's Heroes

Craig "Skip" Becker Receives Veteran of the Month Honor and Recognition

By Terri Hendry

Craig "Skip" Becker stood proudly within the crowd gathered inside the Pleasant Senior Center in Winnemucca on July 25, 2018. With his arms folded, he could barely contain his emotions as the ceremony to honor him as Veteran of the Month got underway.

Nevada Department of Veterans Services Director Kat Miller kicked off the event. She asked for a show of hands of veterans from members in the audience and then narrowed their selection down to each branch of the military. Within those first few moments, it became clear Becker was among warriors from all five branches of service. As the ceremony continued, it also became clear Becker had gone above and beyond service to his community and fellow veterans.

In his younger years, Becker served in the Navy. Today he is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 12116 in Winnemucca. He received training as a benefits coordinator so he can help fellow veterans access earned benefits. He makes sure to bring brochures to the Senior Center so area veterans have access to information.

Becker is a member of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). He drives veterans to their medical appointments, sometimes as far as Reno. He also works as a backup driver for the Senior Center bus service. He helps load and give out food at the Community Pantry as well as transports food to the Food Bank and Senior Center. You can also find Becker busy coordinating parades and memorial services. Setting up a booth and selling t-shirts at the Tri-County Fair.

VFW Vice Commander Bob Sheldon told the group it was Becker who made sure a homeless Coast Guard veteran was part of the community's Veterans Day events. He said, "The veteran had set up camp next to the Humboldt River, living the way he chose to live. But Skip made certain that veteran attended our Veterans Day activities."

Certificates presented on behalf of Governor Brian Sandoval and U.S. Senator Dean Heller were read out loud during the ceremony. Nevada Assemblyman Ira Hansen and Winnemucca Mayor Pro Tem Paige Brooks were also in attendance. By the time it was Becker's turn to say a few words at the microphone, a wave of humility washed over him. It took him a second to become composed. Once he was able to speak, Becker spoke of the rewards

that come in service to others. "I feel really, really good at the end of the day if I managed to help somebody. That is what makes me a very 'happy camper,' " he said.

Becker's family and extended family rallied around him afterwards for pictures, hugs and handshakes. Becker said, "This really makes me proud. I'm surprised I was selected. I feel...very honored."

The Veteran of the Month program serves to shine a spotlight on veterans who go above and beyond in their service to fellow veterans or military members. If you would like to nominate someone as Veteran of the Month go here:

<http://veterans.nv.gov/benefits-and-services/veteran-of-the-month-program/>

Nominations for Veteran Supporter of the Month are here:

<http://veterans.nv.gov/benefits-and-services/veteran-supporter-of-the-month/>

Honor Guard Receives Honors of Its Own Honor

By Chuck N. Baker

Ram Parocua is the Commander of the Disabled America Veterans (DAV) Chapter 12 Honor Guard. Last month, he and several of his fellow Guard members stood before a crowd gathered in the lobby of the Grant Sawyer Building in Las Vegas. It was their turn to receive recognition and honor. The DAV Chapter 12 Honor Guard was named Veteran Supporter of the Month.

The Honor Guard carries out solemn duties for fellow military personnel during burial services at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Boulder City.

In his brief remarks, Parocua pointed out that not all the guard members were able to attend the ceremony. But he explained that, "The original Honor Guard was one. Myself." The group currently consists of 18 members, as well as additional occasional volunteers. "We now also have a bagpiper who supports us," he said. "And I also want to give thanks to the wives that support the men," he said.

The award was presented by Lt. Governor Mark Hutchison on behalf of Governor Brian Sandoval. Hutchinson praised the Governor for the work he has done to support veterans and the military in Nevada. He said "Serving and blessing the lives of other people is in the best interest of the country and the military." While shaking Parocua's hand, Hutchinson added, "We recognize your service and your sacrifice."

The Veteran Supporter of the Month recognizes both active organizations and non-veteran community members that provide exceptional support to Nevada's veterans, their families and military members.

The program is administered by the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS). Anyone can nominate candidates for the award. Submissions are reviewed by members of the Nevada Veterans Service Commission at its quarterly meetings. The VSC's recommendations are then forwarded to the Governor.

If you would like to nominate someone as Veteran of the Month go here:

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The Color Purple Will Take Center Stage This Month!

By Chuck N. Baker

August 7th will be a "Red Letter Day" for those who have served in the military and were wounded in combat. The State of Nevada as well as the Cities of Las Vegas and Henderson have combined efforts to honor local contingents of the Military Order of the Purple Heart naming August 7th as Purple Heart Day.

This is all part of Governor Brian Sandoval pledge to make Nevada the friendliest state in the nation for veterans and military members. Governor Sandoval is scheduled to issue a proclamation on August 7, 2018 proclaiming Purple Heart Day across Nevada.

Also on August 7, the Clark County Commission will issue its own proclamation naming Clark County a Purple Heart County. At 9 a.m. on that day Chapter 711 of the local Military Order of the Purple Heart will present a Purple Heart flag and a plaque to members of the commission. The plaque will hang permanently in the building lobby.

Also, Chapter Commander Len Yelinek is presenting an enamel sign that will be installed in a parking space at the building's parking lot. The sign reserves the parking spot for combat wounded veterans who have been presented with a Purple Heart medal.

Earlier that morning, there will be another similar ceremony. At 8:30 a.m. Henderson Mayor Debra March and members of the City Council will host a ribbon cutting ceremony marking the opening the City's newly developed Purple Heart Plaza. The Mayor will then proclaim August 7 Purple Heart Day in the City of Henderson. Once the ribbon is cut, Chapter 730 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart will conduct a Purple Heart Day ceremony and pay tribute to America's fallen comrades.

As a part of the ceremonies, members of the chapter will unveil the first of 1,800 brick pavers in honor of the mayor's son. The Operation Enduring Freedom veteran served in Iraq and received a Silver Star. In this case, silver and purple blend well together. Completing the event, Chapter 730 Commander Dan Peterson will read aloud Sandoval's proclamation.

The national headquarters of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is located in Virginia, with chapters found throughout the nation. Members have served in the United States military during wartime, and have been wounded in combat. The citation was first presented by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War. But the color purple itself appeared in the prehistoric art during the Neolithic era.

The public is encouraged to attend the August 7 ceremonies to show respect and to honor soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who have received a Purple Heart. For more information about the ceremonies, call Len Yelinek at (702) 480-0789. Oh, and don't forget, there is still plenty of time to go shopping and buy an item of purple clothing to wear proudly on August 7th!

Blinded Veterans to Meet in Reno/Sparks

By Chuck N. Baker

The City of Sparks will play host to the 73rd annual convention of the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) at the Nugget Casino Resort on August 13-17, 2018.

The annual event is BVA's premier gathering geared toward the education and development of its members. It will bring together the top leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) along with academics, industry leaders and government officials to discuss issues and challenges facing the disabled and the medical community today and in the future.

Scheduled speakers include Kat Miller, Director, Nevada Department of Veterans Services, and Rachel B. Rarnoni, Chief Research and Development Officer at the Dept. of Veterans Affairs. Her topic will center on the agency's priority programs, as well as blind rehabilitation projects at select VA medical centers. In addition, Governor Brian Sandoval has been invited to address the convention.

The Blinded Veterans Association is the only official voice for America's veterans who are blind or visually impaired. The organization has successfully advocated for their needs since WWII.

A full convention schedule is available at the association's website, Bva.org. Sessions will include training on the ABC's of Regional Group planning on Monday, August 13 from 9 a.m. through 10:15 a.m. Also on Monday, there will be skills training on the Victor Reader and Home Automation. At 10:30 a.m. life member Howard Myers will deliver a presentation about his book, "Blind Vision."

Additional sessions for BVA members who wish to become Volunteer Service Officers will include training by instructor Wade Davis. Part 1 will be held Monday from 9 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. Part Two will be Tuesday, August 14, from 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

The exhibit hall, featuring manufacturers and vendors displaying products and services for blinded individuals, will be open August 14-15. Exhibitors and sponsors include National Industries for the Blind, eye tracking technology system NuEyes, wearable assistive device manufacturer OrCam, magnifier manufacturer Eschenbach, low-vision and automated voice wrist watch manufacturer LS&S, and many other companies.

On Tuesday, August 14, the Blindfold Games will hold an information session where members will be able to obtain a free game. For female veterans, an exclusive pampering session will be facilitated by a lifestyle coach for the blind.

Attendees can enjoy beauty tips and freshen up before the Tuesday evening reception and dinner.

The BVA has a Southern Nevada chapter under the guidance of President Joe Tasby. He can be reached at (702) 869-8637. Blinded or visually impaired veterans who are not BVA members are encouraged to attend the convention and join the organization. The BVA specifically helps veterans and their families overcome the challenges of blindness. It welcomes individuals who offer ideas, thoughts and personal service that can assist in achieving that worthy goal. For more information about BVA and its services, and more details about the convention, call toll-free (800) 669-7079 or visit Bva.org.

Korean War Veteran? This Free Gift is For You!

For a limited time, and for the first time ever, the nationally acclaimed book *Korea Reborn: A Grateful Nation Honors War Veterans for 60 Years of Growth* and *The Remembered War*, a 2014 GI Film Festival-selected documentary, are being bundled together in a collector's edition commemorative book and DVD set.

Both the book and DVD remember and honor the brave Americans who served during the Korean War. Their fight for freedom in a war-torn, distant land has nourished a modern and prosperous Republic of Korea, one of the world's most powerful testaments to the fruits of liberty.

The books are a gift from the South Korean government and are made available to you, Korean War veterans, at NO COST! The book retails for \$49.95 but again, it is yours free, if you are a Korean War veteran. **While we honor the service of all who veterans, this offer is a special gift reserved only for those who served in combat during the Korean War.**

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!

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.

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Health and Wellness

Important Milestone at the Nevada State Veterans Home

Join us as the Nevada State Veterans Home celebrates its 16th Anniversary! There will be refreshments, hors d'oeuvres, tours and more!

The celebration will be held on Wednesday, August 8th from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Nevada State Veterans Home located at 100 Veterans Memorial Drive in Boulder City, Nevada. If you're coming from Henderson, take 93/95 South towards Boulder City, approximately 2 miles past the Railroad Pass Hotel & Casino, turn left at Veterans Memorial Drive. The home is located on the left hand side.

If you're not familiar with the award winning home, this would be a good opportunity to learn more about the services provided. The 180-bed home was established in 2002 and has served thousands of veterans and their families. NSVH is state-owned and operated, Medicare/Medicaid certified and licensed by the State of Nevada. The home provides 24-hour skilled care to qualified veterans, veterans' spouses, and Gold Star parents.

State veterans homes have a long-standing tradition of providing quality domiciliary, nursing home care, and/or adult day health care. State homes are approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and honor the tremendous sacrifice our veterans have made, recognize their service to our Nation, and fill an important need for veterans who desire to spend their last years with "comrades."

If you or a loved one would like to become a resident, simply visit our website here: <http://veterans.nv.gov/benefits-and-services/nevada-state-veterans-home-boulder-city-nv/>

Or review our NDVS Annual Report SFY 2017: <http://veterans.nv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/bb1eb56b-9280-4422-85d6-0ea2a380335c.pdf>

Construction Update on the Northern Nevada State Veterans Home

By Terri Hendry

During the July 2017 groundbreaking ceremony for the new Northern Nevada State Veterans Home Governor Brian Sandoval stated it perfectly. He told the crowd construction would move quickly going from "sagebrush to service" in 18 short months. Fast forward to today and the ribbon cutting ceremony for the brand new skilled care facility is set for December 17 at 5:30 p.m.

Want to take a look at the progress? Just go here:

<https://youtu.be/5MH0jyefUXM>

Interest and Eligibility

The facility will serve veterans, their spouse and Gold Star parents. Applicants must be prescreened to qualify and demonstrate skilled nursing care is a medical need. The Veterans Administration requires at least 75% of the residents in the home are veterans and no more than 25% are spouses or Gold Star parents.

The Nevada Department of Veterans Services is placing names on an interest list for those who may want to become a resident. Click here for to download the interest form and mailing information: <http://veterans.nv.gov/benefits-and-services/northern-nevada-state-veterans-home-sparks-nv/>

About the Facility

The 96-bed skilled nursing care facility has a design and concept is like no other. It will never feel like a hospital or institution. The 102,000 square foot facility will feature a host of amenities including:

- Each resident will have their own private room, private bath.
- Residents will share a den, living room and kitchen with 15 other residents for a "community feel" in an area called a "household."
- The physical design encourages independence, privacy and mobility.
- Each household will have a personal laundry area, den, front door entry as well as a courtyard.
- One wing will be dedicated to memory care.
- A "Town Hall" will feature a restaurant, coffee bistro, sports bar, therapy gym, beauty/barber shop, general commissary store as well as parade grounds for military and patriotic ceremonies.
- The "Town Hall" will also serve as a gathering place, hub and heart for area Veteran Service Organizations and other Veteran Support or Advocacy groups.

Veterans in Care Program Marks 100th Ceremony Honoring and Recognizing Nevada's Veterans

The Veterans In Care (VIC) outreach program marked a major milestone on July 25, 2018 at Lakeside Manor Senior Living in Reno, Nevada. The ceremony became the 100th VIC ceremony since the outreach program began in the spring of 2016. Since then, the program has reached more than 1,800 veterans living in residential, skilled or assisted care facilities.

The VIC program honors, recognizes and thanks these Nevada veterans. It also connects them to benefits and programs earned through military service. Some may not know they have earned benefits that, in some cases, may greatly enhance their quality of life, as well as their spouse or families.

The VIC Administrator is Wendy Simons, NDVS Deputy Director of Health & Wellness. She said, "We are thrilled to celebrate the 100th ceremony. In just a few short years, we have been able to touch the lives of thousands of veterans in hundreds of care facilities."

She added, ""The initiative is an effort to find our 'silent veteran heroes' who may reside in community settings, and are not enrolled in the VA system or are not aware of benefits and services."

The VIC program encompasses three related components; education regarding Benefits and Programs; Veteran Culture Education and Training for health care providers who work with veterans; and Quality of Life Recognition and Communication for veteran residents.

For more information on the VIC program go here:

<http://veterans.nv.gov/benefits-and-services/veterans-in-care/>

How a Recumbent Trike Changed Everything

By Janel Gibson

Kelley Guidry is no stranger to adversity or challenges. The former Vehicle Control Maintenance and Air Force Security Forces Airmen served in the United States Air Force for six-and-a-half years. She was awarded an Accommodation Medal for her role in Operation Enduring Freedom from Nellis Air Force Base, 820th Red Horse Squadron directly following the 9/11 Terror attacks. Currently, she is the co-founder of the 501(c)(3) organization *Forgotten Not Gone, Inc.*

Following a challenging eight years of struggling with her disabled veteran husband's deteriorating health, her own disability and depression, she was at a breaking point. After a week of unpaid leave from work at the IRS to take her husband to the War Related Illness Clinic, a therapy was prescribed for her husband that would change both their lives.

Kelley and her husband decided to take out a personal loan and purchase the recommended 3-wheel recumbent trike for rehabilitation.

They were able to purchase two trikes, thanks to the terrific deal they were able to strike with the company, Utah Trikes. This allowed them to ride together! For more information on Utah Trikes go here: <http://www.utahtrikes.com/>

The doctors told them this would help with anxiety, depression and physical recovery. After just 2 months, Kelley saw an amazing recovery with her husband. Peter's anxiety level had decreased, he was getting physical activity and he had begun to be social again.

Together they realized and then decided every veteran should have access to this therapy or any other alternative therapy regardless of whether the VA could provide them or not. They created *Forgotten Not Gone* to accomplish that goal. The nonprofit provides an answer to living without pain or pills and how to maintain a good quality of life after leaving the military.

Their goal now is to continue to give back, inspire, motivate, serve and breathe hope back into their fellow veterans, who were not lost at war but forgotten at home. If you would like more information about the program, just visit their website at <http://forgottennotgone.org/>

VA Partnership with National Cancer Institute Will Boost Veteran Access to Clinical Trials

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it has formed a partnership with the National Cancer Institute (NCI). This partnership will provide more access to the latest treatment options for VA patients with cancer.

“Strategic partnerships, such as this one with the National Cancer Institute, allow the VA to leverage the strengths of both organizations to the benefit of all stakeholders, especially our veterans,” said VA’s Acting Secretary Peter O’Rourke. “By increasing enrollment in these trials, the VA and veterans will contribute to important cancer research. This will not only help our veterans, but also advance cancer care for all Americans and people around the world.”

The NCI and VA Interagency Group to Accelerate Trials Enrollment, also known as NAVIGATE, is launching at 12 VA sites: Atlanta, Georgia; Bronx, New York; Charleston, South Carolina; Denver, Colorado; Durham, North Carolina; Hines, Illinois; Long Beach, California; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Palo Alto, California; Portland, Oregon; San Antonio, Texas; and West Haven, Connecticut. Boston, Massachusetts, will also serve as a coordinating center for the effort.

NAVIGATE will build infrastructure at VA sites to enable more veterans to take part in cutting-edge clinical trials sponsored by NCI. Such trials typically test innovative experimental treatments, such as precision-medicine therapies based on patients’ genetic profiles, or immunotherapies that harness patients’ own immune systems to bring about cures.

The NAVIGATE network will also establish best practices and share insights to help other VA Medical Centers nationwide enroll more veterans in cancer clinical trials.

Special attention is being given to minority patients, who often have less access to new treatments and are not as well represented in clinical trials in the U.S. While the VA has a robust research program — including clinical trials on cancer and other diseases — at more than 100 sites nationwide, VA facilities often face challenges initiating and completing trials, including ones conducted through the NCI National Clinical Trials Network. Local VA research staff, for example, may lack adequate support to handle certain regulatory and administrative tasks involved in these studies. NAVIGATE will help remove those barriers.

NAVIGATE will also seek to enroll Veterans in trials sponsored by NCI’s Community Oncology Research Program, which focuses on cancer prevention and symptom management.

The VA's involvement in NAVIGATE is being managed through the Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) part of the VA's Office of Research and Development. CSP has a long history of running impactful clinical trials focused on Veterans' health needs.

To learn more about CSP and VA Research, visit www.research.va.gov

VA and IBM Watson Health Extend Partnership to Support Veterans With Cancer

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and IBM Watson Health have announced the extension of a public-private partnership to apply artificial intelligence (AI) to help interpret cancer data in the treatment of veteran patients.

This partnership was first [announced](#) two years ago as part of the [National Cancer Moonshot Initiative](#). VA oncologists have now used IBM Watson for Genomics technology to support precision oncology care for more than 2,700 veterans with cancer.

Precision oncology is the practice of biologically directed cancer care. For example, the mutations in a cancer's genome (the cancer's DNA) can significantly impact the treatment options available to treat that cancer and the likely outcomes after treatment. By knowing the cancer genome, oncologists and patients are able to choose therapies that specifically target the patient's cancer.

VA's precision oncology program primarily supports stage 4 cancer patients who have exhausted other treatment options. The partnership extension with IBM will enable VA oncologists to continue using Watson for Genomics through at least June 2019.

“Our mission with [VA's precision oncology program](#) is to bring the most advanced treatment opportunities to Veterans, in hopes of giving our nation's heroes better treatments through these breakthroughs,” said Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke. “We look forward to continuing this strategic partnership to assist VA in providing the best care for our veterans.”

VA treats 3.5 percent of the nation's cancer patients — the largest group of cancer patients within any one health-care group. In order to bring precision oncology advances to this large group of patients, with equal access available anywhere in the country, VA established a central “hub” in Durham, North Carolina.

In this facility, a small group of oncologists and pathologists receive tumor samples from patients nationwide and sequence the tumor DNA. They then use AI — the ability of a computer program or a machine to think and learn — to help interpret the genomic data, identifying relevant mutations and potential therapeutic options that target those mutations.

More than one-third of the patients who have benefited from VA's precision oncology program are veterans from rural areas where it has traditionally been difficult to deliver cutting-edge medical breakthroughs.

“The VA is leading the nation to scale and spread the delivery of high-quality precision oncology care, one veteran at a time,” said Dr. Kyu Rhee, chief health officer for IBM Watson Health. “It is incredibly challenging to read, understand and stay up-to-date with the breadth and depth of the medical literature and link them to relevant mutations for personalized cancer treatments. This is where AI can play an important role in helping to scale precision oncology, as demonstrated in our work with VA, the largest integrated health system in the U.S.”

For more information about the VA's precision oncology program, visit <https://www.research.va.gov/pubs/varqu/spring2016/4.cfm>.

VEText System Improves Access And Is Now Available!

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently launched VEText. It is a text messaging appointment-reminder system that has so far, helped the VA reduce no-show medical visits by more than 100,000.

The VA introduced VEText in March of this year (2018) and 138 VA facilities are currently using the automated interactive text-message system. It reminds veterans of upcoming health-care appointments, allowing them easily to confirm or cancel the event.

“Every missed appointment represents a lost opportunity to provide faster access to care for a veteran in need,” said VA’s Acting Secretary Peter O’Rourke. “VEText underscores the VA’s commitment to digital modernization and represents a milestone in putting more user-friendly capabilities in the hands of veterans and our employees.”

According to the Veterans Health Administration’s (VHA) Office of Veterans Access to Care, as of July 9, 2018 more than 3.24 million patients have received VEText messages and canceled 319,504 appointments, freeing up time slots for other veterans to use.

Veterans who have previously used the VA health-care system — with a cell phone number listed in their electronic health records — are automatically enrolled in VEText. Veterans can update their phone numbers during the check-in or check-out process for an appointment, at any kiosk.

VEText is integrated with the VA’s electronic health-records system and does not require manual action by the VA staff. Appointments are automatically scheduled and canceled via text message, freeing staff to provide more personalized care to veterans.

“VEText has changed the way we communicate with our veteran patients,” said John Ulyot, VA Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. “Veterans appreciate the convenient, user-friendly system and understand this technology not only helps them, but their fellow Veterans as well.”

For more information about VEText, visit: <https://www.va.gov/HEALTH/VEText.asp>

Also, visit the link below for frequently asked questions about VEText
https://www.va.gov/HEALTH/vetext_faqs.asp

Jake Leinenkugel to lead VA Commission on Veterans' Mental Health Treatment

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced former VA White House Senior Advisor Thomas "Jake" Leinenkugel has been selected to lead a key commission focused on the department's mental health care programs.

The *Creating Options for Veterans' Expedited Recovery* (COVER) commission will examine VA's evidence-based therapy model for treating mental health conditions, as well as the department's complementary and integrated mental health approaches. "Jake has been an ambassador for change at the VA," said Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke. "As leader of this important new commission, Jake will continue to advocate for better care and services for his fellow Veterans."

Leinenkugel has served as a U.S. Marine captain. He joined the VA in January 2017 after retiring in 2014 from his family-operated business, Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Co., where he had served as the company president for 26 years.

At the VA, Leinenkugel is credited with being instrumental in the creation of the department's "[ChooseVA](#)" branding campaign and the implementation of November's [National Veterans and Military Families Month](#). He has also worked to promote VA's efforts to reduce veteran suicides.

For more information about the COVER commission, email COVERCommission@va.gov.

Chief of Staff Talks Mental Health, Prevention, Staffing and More

By Chuck N Baker

Recently the Chief of Staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sat down to talk about a number of health related topics. Below is the abbreviated interview with Dr. Ramu Komanduri:

Q: What is the role of the Chief of Staff?

A: I have a full responsibility ensuring safe, effective health care for our veterans. My goal is to be able to say a veteran can walk in any day and get the care they need as quickly as they can and make sure it's the best, most effective care. We have been fortunate enough to be able to provide that type of care for the vast majority of veterans. The opportunity for me is to take care of veterans.

Q: Discuss the VA Mental Health Department.

A: We have a tremendous Mental Health Department. When you look at the foundation of services of the VA, Primary Care and Mental Health and certainly aspects of Rehabilitation are the most [active areas.] Suicide is a huge issue. I can tell you, look at the national figures, veterans make up about 8.5 percent of the population but they are 18 percent of the population that commit suicide. So, it is very critical. We focus on suicide prevention. One of the challenges we find is when you look at suicide as a risk factor, there are about 20 veterans a day dying by suicide. Out of that population, which is a horrible tragedy, 14 of them never come to the VA. When you look at the data, the veterans who come to the VA had a much lower rate of suicide than veterans not connected to the VA. Getting them enrolled in the VA and getting their health care at the VA is critical. So what we are now focused on is connecting the veterans that don't come to the VA and help them get connected.

Q: One area that has recently gained more focus at the VA involves health care for women veterans. Please comment.

A: Women veterans have really been a rapidly growing population in the VA. What we've done [at the North Las Vegas clinic] is we've established a women's health center. And on top of that we've got in every primary health care center a specialized women's health provider. Women can get [specialized] health care at each of the primary care centers. We really want to reach out to our female veterans and have more of them enrolled. We also have sub-specialists in mental healthcare for women. Tragically there are women who suffer from military sexual trauma or were traumatized in other ways, or have PTSD or other illnesses. We have also started a new program to address non-combat PTSD, which is open to both women and men.

Q: Is health care moving more in the direction of teleconferencing and computer communication?*

A: Yes. Veterans will say 'Why would I need to drive to any location when the majority of my care can be monitored and done at home?'

Q: Does the clinic in North Las Vegas have staffing shortages?

A: We have a tremendous rapidly growing veterans population. In our community every week 150 new veterans enroll in our VA. We are blessed that veterans want to come to our VA. Along with other challenges, how do you keep up with the growth of hiring people? In this community especially, you don't have enough health care professionals. It ranks among the lowest in the nation [for hiring] in both medicine and surgical sub-specialties, doctors, nurses, it's very difficult [to hire enough] in this community ...Academically we are building fellowship programs with UNLV and we're working with Touro University also. We have a cardiology fellowship ... What we've done to attract physicians is we offer loan repayment which is a very attractive program for certain disciplines [psychiatrists and [psychologists] where they can pay off a good chunk of their educational loans, medical school loans, and help them to come to Las Vegas.

Programs and Services for You

Happy Birthday U.S. Coast Guard!

By Chuck N. Baker

The U.S. Coast Guard will mark a celebration this month. On August 4, 2018 the Coast Guard will celebrate its 228th birthday! The Coast Guard is America's oldest maritime defenders, established in 1790. The Coast Guard served as the nation's only armed force on the sea until Congress launched the Navy Department eight years later. Since then, the Coast Guard has protected the U.S. throughout its long history and served proudly in every one of the nation's conflicts.

The Coast Guard and its Auxiliary both work under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The Guard is responsible for protecting the coast lines of American waterways from threats of all kind. The Auxiliary is entrusted to other areas of responsibility, including operating vessel safety checks.

"Safe Boats Save Lives!" is a constant thread that runs through the conversations of most Auxiliary members. Several times a year members hold safety checks, educate vessel owners about safety equipment, explain applications of federal, state and local regulations and answer any related questions at no charge to boat owners.

The Coast Guard and its Auxiliary celebrates its birthday on June 23rd. According to the Auxiliary website, the volunteer membership is now approximately 32,000 strong. There are many volunteer positions offered. In addition to the reward of serving and protecting our country, the Auxiliary provides other benefits seen here: <http://join.cgaux.org/ben.php>

For more information on becoming a member of the Auxiliary go here: <http://join.cgaux.org/gouscgaux.php>

Some Thoughts on Summer Safety

By Joshua Loftis

It seems like we were in eager anticipation of the summer sun to turn around and find summer is now in full swing! For the kids, report cards and tests are replaced with sprinklers, camping, and nights at the drive-in. This is the time of year where hikes and fun at our favorite watering hole take place for some fishing, swimming, and boating.

While we hope you are enjoying your family and friends, some of the experts remind us fun times can quickly turn a corner if the proper precautions aren't taken. Below are some common sense ideas you'll want to keep in mind to remain safe.

If you are out in the sun for long periods, don't forget the sunscreen and don't forget to drink water – If you are thirsty, it is too late. Triple digit temperatures can be unforgiving.

Also, wear appropriate footwear and attire for the activity: If you are floating down the river, consider water shoes to protect your feet from the rock bottom.

If you are hiking, get some nice high-top hiking boots and wear long pants. We live in the desert and so do rattlesnakes as well as mosquitos. If you have pets you like to take on the trails, consider taking them to snake awareness classes.

Last, but definitely not least, when it comes to boating, the Nevada Department of Wildlife shares three things to keep in mind:

1) Make sure you are in good physical condition for boating

It would be a mistake to think boating does not demand good physical conditioning. While you aren't running a marathon or hiking up a mountain – if things turn south, being in top physical shape can be a game changer. Always keep in mind being able to swim and get to safety may require a great amount of strength and energy. Always wear a personal flotation device. (Life jacket)

2) Make sure you are not compromised

It's summer! It is time to enjoy yourself and party! Some of us probably will crack open our adult beverage of choice. Please drink responsibly. Remember things can quickly change while you are boating, and you may have to respond quickly, with a sober mind.

3) Check your equipment

I remember one time where I was in a boating incident that required an emergency paddle. My father told me to go retrieve the emergency paddle from one of the bays on the boat. I pulled it out, and half of the paddle was missing. Apparently it had broken on the previous trip and my dad never replaced it, and we didn't know until we were in a bad situation. Fortunately, we lived to tell the tale and we learned a very valuable lesson. Always check your equipment before you go out. Google boating checklists, and create one custom to your specific recreation and needs. Make sure that your vessel and all support equipment is in good working order. Note: Nevada law requires everyone have a personal floatation device (life jacket) readily available and individuals 13 or younger must have them on at all times while boating.

4) Be Aware of Others You may be in good physical condition, with great energy and strength, and you may have gone over your vessel and equipment checklist again and again, but that is only part of the potential danger with boating. Chances are, you won't be the only ones out on the water, and sometimes this can lead to dangerous situations. When waterways get crowded, this can sometimes spell disaster for those not paying attention. Be aware of your surroundings. Make sure you know where you are at all times and would be able to get to shore safely should the need arise. People are enjoying themselves, the sun, the activities, and can sometimes shut out their surroundings. Be aware of those around you, what they are doing and where they are going. You may not have something happen to you, and that is great, but being aware of others may also lead to you being influential in saving someone else from harm.

The U.S. Coast Guard offers some boating safety courses here:

<http://www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/boating-safety-courses.php>

For more boating safety information visit the Nevada Department of Wildlife:

<http://www.ndow.org/boat/>

Take a boating safety course here:

http://www.ndow.org/Boat/Boating_Education/

Did You Know About the Friendly Skies of the USO?

By Chuck N, Baker

No matter where their flight originates or where they are going, active duty military members and their families have a traveling companion that provides amazing hospitality. It is the private, nonprofit known as the United Service Organization or the USO.

The USO has free use lounges in airports all across the US. In Nevada, there is a free use lounge at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas. It allows you to come in for water, soft drinks, food, internet, gaming, movies or just a place to rest, for free!

At McCarran Airport, the USO has two facilities where members of the military can rest and rejuvenate before moving on to their connecting flights. A third center is located at Creech Air Force Base at Indian Springs. In Nevada and at USO centers at airports in other States, visitors are offered a safe, comfortable environment.

Once there, service people and their families have access to the items noted above, as well as an area for kids to entertain themselves. USO Center Director David Thorson added that area is also, "A sort of a theater room, which is more of a napping room."

The USO likes to advertise to the men and women in uniform its mission is mainly to help active duty personnel and their families as they travel from duty station to duty station and from airport to airport. But the organization also provides transition advice through the Pathfinder Program. It is available to members of the Reserve, the National Guard, active duty units, as well as to military spouses and dependents.

Thorson said, "We help troops transitioning out of the military into civilian life in a sort of a one-on-one concierge type service. We help connect them with employment, education, certification, whatever resources they need." He added, "No matter where they choose to go after their military service, the USO will make it feel like home." Thorson also explained, "Military spouses are also helped through Pathfinder as they too have to 'transition effectively' every time their service member has to move to a different base."

Thorson said the USO has about 250 volunteers in southern Nevada. He explained, "It would be impossible for us to do what we do without them."

The facility in Terminal One is open 24/7 and could not operate without the many volunteers who staff the location. "A lot of our volunteers are veterans," Thorson said. "Some are spouses of veterans and some are even active duty."

Another way to get involved is by donating soft drinks and snacks, Slim Jims, ChapStick, wrapped candy, video games, deodorant, deployment kits that include toiletries and in-kind donations from various corporations. Companies can also become financial sponsors to the USO.

Thorson said, "You have to remember these people are normal people with the normal needs all of us have. The difference is they can get called up and told 'You're going to Afghanistan in two weeks. Pack your bags and get going.' They don't always have the time and the resources to prepare for that. So anything we can do to help really makes a difference."

When it comes to financial donations, anything is accepted and welcomed. Anyone who wants to get involved is encouraged to go to volunteers.uso.org or lasvegas.uso.org and fill out a brief application. It's an opportunity to provide personal service to a service organization.

For a list of USO free lounges across the US go here:

<https://www.sleepinginairports.net/airport-lounges/uso-lounges.htm>

News You Can Use

Battle Born Memorial to Nevada's Fallen Military - We Need Your Help!

The dedication ceremony for Battle Born: Memorial to Nevada's Fallen Military is set for November 9, 2018. We need your help to spread the word and to find *immediate family members who lost a Nevada hero in combat.

Click here to see the 894 names of Nevada's fallen:

<http://veterans.nv.gov/community/nevadas-fallen-heroes/>

The ceremony will be held on the Capitol Grounds in Carson City outside the Nevada State Library and Archives building, located at 100 North Stewart Street. The reception will start at 9:00 a.m. The ceremony will start at 10:00 a.m. We hope you will mark your calendar and tell your friends!

We want to make sure these family members are invited to the ceremony. We also want to make sure we reimburse them for their travel, if they are eligible. (More on eligibility in a moment!)

U.S.S. Corvina Model Will Soon Have a Permanent Place of Remembrance

Join us on Monday, August 6th for the unveiling of the new permanent home of the WWII submarine model of the U.S.S. Corvina. The ceremony begins at 10:00 a.m. inside the Nevada State Archives and Library Building located at 100 North Steward Street in Carson City.

The Corvina was the only American submarine to be sunk by a Japanese submarine during WWII. This submarine model unveiling remembers and honors her loss of 82 crew members.

Thanks to the diligence and efforts of the United States Submarine Veterans, Corvina Base, Sparks, the Corvina submarine model will be taken from storage in a garage, to a public setting. It will serve as a display educating and keeping alive the memory and sacrifices of those serving in WWII. The date of the unveiling event is significant as the USS Corvina was commissioned August 6, 1943 following her launch earlier that year in May.

A new clear, plexi glass display case has been specially designed and built to protect and house, as well as display the 10- foot model replica of the fated submarine. The new case is also set up to display memorabilia from the Corvina and its crew members.

At one time, the Corvina model was on display at the Reno's Veterans Administration Medical Center (VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System), but after a remodeling project at the VA facility, the model was moved for safe keeping and has since been sitting in a private garage. Aside from its appearances in parades or other public venues, the model has been out of daily sight from the public. With this display, that will change.

The Corvina was assigned to Nevada and is one of 52 American submarines lost at sea. For more about the Nevada veterans group visit the Corvina website: <http://usscorvinabase.org/>

For more on the Corvina history and its fallen, visit here: <https://www.oneternalpatrol.com/uss-corvina-226.htm>

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Nevada Air Guard to Send Two C-120 Aircraft to Help Fight California Wildfires

<https://mynews4.com/news/local/nevada-air-guard-to-send-two-c-130-aircraft-to-help-fight-california-wildfires>

The Department of Defense Begins Process of Identifying Korean War Remains

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1589082/agency-begins-process-of-identifying-korean-war-remains/>

Ivan Urango celebrates 100th birthday!

<http://www.ktvn.com/clip/14513264/veterans-100th-birthday>

Not Your Parents' Military Anymore

By Chuck N Baker

Sometimes things stay the same year after year in the military. There is short hair on men, spit shined shoes and military decorations pinned in specific places on jackets. But it seems just when you get used to things never changing, that's when things change.

If you've been out of the military for a while, you may be interested in some of those changes as there are some you may not necessarily expect. For example, the Air Force now allows men to wear earrings while in civilian attire and off-duty on military installations.

That's not the only change. Earlier this year the Air Force and the Army separately announced several new dress regulations for female warriors. The U.S. Air Force now allows female airmen to wear their hair in the popular loc, or updo style. According to Air Force Instruction AFI-36-2903 (Dress and Personal Appearance of AF Personnel), the loc, along with formerly authorized styles such as braids, twists and cornrows are now allowed. The U.S. Navy is also making changes in this direction allowing female sailors to wear a pony tail, wider buns and sometimes below the collar as seen in the link below:

<https://www.military.com/kitup/2018/07/13/here-are-rules-behind-navys-new-female-hair-regs.html>

Part of the change in dress regulations is aimed at bringing more men and women into the military. Strict adherence to military structure and obeying regulations and orders from superiors will continue to be a part of life in the service. But some note the fact the Department of Defense is recognizing that some aspects of civilian life can be blended into today's combat-ready forces is a major step in embracing a changing world.

Military recruiters and their superiors are said to be embracing these changes and possibly even more because of stiff competition from civilian businesses and industries due to the low unemployment rate.

One significant change potentially on the horizon would be the demise of the Army's long-time advertising approach "Army Strong."

According to news reports, Sergeant Major of the Army, Daniel Dailey, announced the service is looking to possibly adapt a new advertising approach. In the 1980s and 1990s "Be All You Can Be" was one of the most successful advertising campaigns the Army had ever tried. But times change, and so did that slogan. It's now believed "Army Strong" may have outlived its ability to attract new men and women so it may be time to change once again. When word got out that a new slogan was being considered, many began sending in

suggestions. However, the Army is not soliciting input from the public and instead prefers to work with professional marketing officials.

In anticipation of changes and new challenges ahead, the Army as well as the Marine Corps may get new uniforms to handle extreme weather. This comes as the U.S. Navy is testing a new uniform for sea-duty sailors and the Air Force considers changing its Operational Camouflage Pattern. More in the links below!

MARINES/ARMY: Extreme weather gear may be ahead:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/army-marine-corps-changing-uniforms-cold-war-combat-2018-2>

AIR FORCE: Check out changes to the Air Force Operational Camouflage Pattern:

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/05/14/its-official-air-force-switching-armys-ocp-uniform.html>

First Female Admiral Retired

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/07/26/navys-first-female-admiral-retired-rear-adm-alene-b-duerk-dead-at-98.html>

Education and Employment

Why I Became a Nevada Veterans Advocate

By Annette Coats

I'm a widow of a disabled Marine who served in Vietnam. Both Dave and I had lived in the "Biggest Little City" back in the early 90s. As a retired attorney from Florida, I returned to the Silver State in October of 2016. This brought me closer to my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren as my daughter lives in the Salt Lake City area while my son lives in the Sacramento area.

A friend connected me to the volunteer opportunities that come with being a Nevada Veterans Advocate (NVA). I had been doing pro bono work as an attorney in Florida when my friend in Reno gave me a newspaper clipping that mentioned the NVA course. She knew of my interest in doing some sort of volunteer work in Nevada so once I was back in Reno, the timing was perfect.

Last year, I completed the course and became a certified NVA. The course consists of 20 modules providing answers to the common questions presented by veterans and their families. Upon completing the course, I received an email from Cathy Yates, Outreach Director for the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS). She was seeking volunteers to help in the Reno NDVS office and I gladly volunteered helping the staff with various tasks at least once a week at the Corporate Drive location.

Although I've only participated in a few outreach activities to date, I quickly learned there are many Nevada Heroes who are unaware of the many support programs offered by communities and nonprofit organizations, as well as state and federal agencies to those who have served in the military.

Governor Brian Sandoval has stated many times his mission is to make Nevada the friendliest state in the nation for veterans and military members. Becoming a certified NVA is one way you can help make that happen and then some! There is no cost for the Nevada Veterans Advocacy online course. You may sign up at <https://nvapps.state.nv.us>.

If you know of any outreach opportunities where NVAs may be available to answer questions and provide information to veterans and their families, please contact Cathy Yates at 775-321-4774 or email her at yatesc@veterans.nv.gov.

Free Nevada Veterans Advocate Workshop in Elko

By Terri Hendry

Join us for a free two-day workshop that will set you on the path to becoming a Nevada Veterans Advocate (NVA)!

An NVA is a person who helps educate veterans, active duty military members, guard and guard reserve members, as well as their families about benefits and opportunities they may be eligible for and have earned through military service.

Simply put: Nevada Veterans Advocates are people who want to help others and take the time to learn how to do so!

To save your seat, register by going here: <http://bit.ly/2NnXQZ3>

Pre-registration will also be available at the venue on Saturday, October 20, beginning at 7:00 a.m. Continental breakfast is included both days. Afternoon snack and beverage also provided.

Travel reimbursement may be available to those who qualify. Must be traveling more than 75 miles from the event. Please contact kingm@veterans.nv.gov to learn more. ALL TRAVEL REQUESTS MUST BE PRE-APPROVED.

Become a Patriot Employer!

By Terri Hendry

(Statewide) – 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 benefit of hiring veterans goes 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 include integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness that would make any business or company proud. 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, and 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

Special Veterans Day Event Will Commemorate WWI Veterans

You won't want to miss a special Veterans Day event at the Nevada State Veterans Home in Boulder City, Nevada! The Nevada Department of Veterans Services will host a day-long event to honor and remember the service and sacrifice of WWI veterans.

This year, 2018, marks the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice that ended WWI on the 11th month on the 11th day in the 11th hour. Nevada was a young state in 1918. Thousands of Nevada soldiers were sent to fight "over there." Sadly, 195 of them never made it home.

The event will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a book signing inside the home in partnership with Henderson Barnes and Noble. Author, historian and public speaker Patrick K. O'Donnell will sign his most recent work, "The Untold Story of American's Unknown Soldier and WWI's Most Decorated Heroes Who Brought Him Home." His latest book was released in May of this year to great reviews!

The WWI Commemorative Ceremony will be held at 1:30 p.m. in front of the home with Governor Brian Sandoval and O'Donnell serving as the keynote speakers.

The day will also include a keepsake program with your own commemoration WWI pin. There will also be WWI memorabilia displays, a "cantina," WWI costumes and period music, along with special entertainment and other surprises.

For more on the 100th Anniversary of WWI go here:
<https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php>

Personal Memories: A Brief Look Back Since 9/11

By Chuck N. Baker

Every month, NDVS seeks to honor each and every veteran, whether living or deceased, from every conflict as well as in times of restless peace. If you served in the military, we want to recognize and honor your service. August is Anti-Terrorism Awareness Month. If you served or are serving in the Global War Against Terrorism, we'd like to hear from you to share your story.

In honor of those engaged in the Global War Against Terrorism, Air Force veteran Chuck Baker shares some memories from 9/11. Here is his story:

On the morning of September 11, 2001, there were a series of three coordinated attacks by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda against the United States. The attacks, in which there were 2,977 American victims, saw an increase in the number of individuals enlisting in the United States military. Since then, the nation has been involved in a number of conflicts, many centering in the Middle East. August has been designated as Antiterrorism Awareness Month. As history continues to unfold in 2018, this article will take a look back at some of the major conflicts the U.S. has been involved in since 9/11. And, we'll reflect with some personal observations.

When it comes to horrific negative experiences that affect the nation, the great majority of Americans who were living during times of specific events will always carry those memories in their minds. Examples include the attack on Pearl Harbor, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and more recently the attacks on three U.S. locations on 9/11. The 9/11 event has led directly or indirectly to wars that continue to this day.

Beginning in 2001 and continuing today, part of the War on Terror is being fought in Afghanistan. Like Vietnam and Korea, the names of many countries and cities we currently fight in had not previously been in our normal, day to day vocabulary. Once we took up arms, that changed. For example a reporter would begin a typical newscast about an actual event by saying "U.S. Army engineers cleared a section of road in Afghanistan today, in the region of Gor Tapa in the province of Kunduz." Only a few people would run and open their world maps. But such news these past many years have opened the eyes of a lot of Americans: So-called third world nations exist, and for reasons true and untrue some of them are our enemies. And while they cling to ancient rituals in some cases, they have modern weaponry and detailed tactics at their disposal.

Since 9/11 terrorist organizations that we fight against have expanded exponentially. For example al-Qaeda, Taliban, Hezbollah, ISIS, Hamas to name a few.

In Iraq beginning in 2003 and ending for the U.S. in 2011, we fought again under the umbrella of The War on Terror. We invaded and occupied Iraq, overthrew the Ba'ath Party government and captured and executed leader Saddam Hussein. But in 2014 we returned to Iraq to fight ISIS.

And during that fighting in 2004, still under the War on Terror, we entered Pakistan. Insurgents were active in the northern tribal regions and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. When 2007 rolled around, we saw action in Somalia.

Off and on we have entered Syria and fought factions of that nation's forces as well as elements of ISIS. It was a part of what we called Operation Inherent Resolve. Giving a war an arguably romantic descriptive name is a modern device. We call the Afghanistan theater Operation Enduring Freedom. We took on Iraq under Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Operation Enduring Freedom began on October 7, 2001 with allied air strikes on Taliban and al-Qaeda targets. We linked the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to al-Qaeda, a group that operated under the Taliban regime's protection in Afghanistan. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the United States responded by deploying military personnel in Southwest Asia. But there are more, less known operations. In 2014 as the U.S. continued to train Afghans to secure their nation, and Enduring Freedom was succeeded by Operation Freedom Sentinel. During the Iraq war, the second battle of Fallujah in 2004 was dubbed Operation New Dawn. And again in 2010, a battle in Afghanistan in Trekh Nawa was named Operation New Dawn. But wait, there's more! Among other battles and other names, several U.S. missions in Africa and the Middle East have the word "shield" in their names — Juniper Shield, Octave Shield and Spartan Shield.

When it comes to individual recollections of recent military experiences, there are thousands of stories that have been told, and many that are yet to be told. I can begin with a very personal one — because it happened to me. The evening of 9/10 I was in Washington, D.C., having dinner with an associate of Rep. Shelley Berkley (D-NV.) I was in D.C. to attend a journalism seminar, and while I was there I had scheduled informal meetings with some of Nevada's elected officials or their staff members. Like so many evenings in so many American cities, it was a pleasant night, and we focused on dinner and local politics as opposed to international relations. Of course the next morning changed everything.

The journalism seminar, which was in its second day, began to take shape, when someone rushed into the classroom and announced that an airplane had crashed into New York's World Trade Center. A large projection television was turned on. Like most Americans, the class wondered if the flight was an accident, or planned. Moments later when the second plane hit the trade center, we knew the answer. We were all stunned. But then when a third plane hit the Pentagon virtually down the street from our classroom, reporters who worked on daily newspapers jumped up and ran to cover the story. I was the editor and publisher of a monthly paper, and did not have an impending deadline. I ended up walking the streets, observing that store fronts were closing, traffic heading in the direction of the Pentagon was being rerouted, local and federal law enforcement vehicles were blocking certain streets and slowly the city was coming to a standstill. One retail establishment that stayed open and found dozens of customers was a local Starbucks. People flocked there to drink coffee and lament the attacks. As darkness rolled in I noticed several pedestrians carrying copies of newspapers with the headline screaming about the attack. I asked where I could buy a paper, and I was directed a few blocks away to the Washington Post building. The company had set up a makeshift newsstand outside and an individual was selling papers as fast as they were being printed and delivered. I bought several copies to bring home. The next morning, newsstands were also selling daily papers from nearby Eastern cities — New York, Baltimore, Boston. Being a pack rat, I purchased those as well.

The airlines were all shut down, but I managed through persistence and intestinal fortitude to reach Amtrak via phone and snag a ticket to Nevada by way of Needles, Calif. and a connecting bus to Las Vegas. As a Vietnam combat veteran in the early days of the war, while I was on the train my thoughts went back to my time in the jungle. I recalled discussing the war and making the statement that one reason we were at a disadvantage was because the Viet Cong knew the jungles like the backs of their hands. But even with government maps and compasses, Americans were still strangers in the night. We further projected that if we were fighting the war in the States, we would have the advantage. We knew the streets, the alleys, the dead ends, the tunnels, the waterways, the freeways, and the VC didn't. Perhaps that scenario would have worked to our advantage. But what we didn't figure on was that when the war did come to our shores years later, it was through the use of jet aircraft flying as missiles. Once again, we were at a (temporary) disadvantage.

Fast forward to more recent conflicts in the Middle East. Army veteran Richard Carreon, a Las Vegas resident, fought in Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. He was brought to the USA from the Philippines when he was eight years old. He said as he grew to adulthood he observed the opportunities our nation had to offer, and felt he wanted to do something to show his appreciation. He joined

the Army. As a chemical weapons specialist, he was sent to many different Army bases around the world. In the Middle East his main focus was to identify and gather intelligence concerning high value targets, and take action against them. He invested 14 years in the service, and said he left due to injuries he suffered during raids overseas. Looking back at those wars in which he took part, he said that he feels we were there for the right reasons, "but decisions that were made created conditions in Iraq that prolonged the need for our presence." He added that because the mission was executed in the way that it was, "we stayed a lot longer than we should have."

He left the Army with the rank of Staff Sgt., and felt he wanted to do more for America. Toward that goal, today he is heavily involved in veterans organizations including the VFW and the Nevada Veterans Council, among others. Many agree with his comments on the Middle East, many do not. I could relate various stories about our actions in the Middle East all day long. The fact is, we are still there in 2018. There are probably more opinions on our involvement than can honestly be counted. But that could be placed in the positive column. After all, opinions are part of what America is all about.

Have a “Mari” Birthday, Coast Guard!

By Josh Loftis

As the United States Coast Guard celebrates its birthday this month, we thought we'd share a few facts.

The United States Coast Guard was created on August 4, 1790 by Congress at the request of Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton was, at the time, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the United States Coast Guard (known at that time as The U.S. Revenue Cutter Service) was purposed with collecting customs duties in our nation's seaports.

Although the Coast Guard is its own branch of the Uniformed Services of the United States, during peacetime they operate under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and transfer under the U.S. Navy in times of war. The coast guard has been “activated” twice – in 1917 and in 1941.

Although the U.S. Coast Guard records the least personnel, it maintains around 240 patrol ships, tenders, tugs and icebreakers and around 1650 smaller boats, as well as around 200 aerial machines like helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. The Coast Guard is tasked with three basic roles:

- Maritime Safety
- Maritime Security
- Maritime Stewardship

Unique to the U.S. Coast Guard is that every active and reserved commissioned officer, and all warrant and petty officers are given authority to act as federal customs officers, with law enforcement authority.

The United States Coast Guard has participated in every major U. S. conflict since 1790 to today, to include Omaha Beach on D-Day, transporting groups during Vietnam, several missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom and the war in Afghanistan, and they continue to be an invaluable asset on the Global War on Terror.

We would like to take this time to thank all members and support staff of the United States Coast guard for keeping our shores safe and secure.

Mark Your Calendar

[Warrior of the Canyon](#)

August 4, 2018, 6:30 AM – 2:00 PM

Lamoille School House

Lamoille, NV 89828

[NSVH Open House](#)

August 8, 2018, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

100 Veterans Memorial Dr. Boulder City

[Office of Military Legal Assistance](#)

August 10 and 11, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

6900 N. Pecos Rd. North Las Vegas

[Paralyzed Veterans of America Air Guns](#)

August 11, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

East Las Vegas Community Center

250 N. Eastern Ave.

[22 Warriors Foundation 2nd Tuesday of the Month Mixer](#)

August 14, 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Las Vegas Distillery

7330 Eastgate Road

Henderson, NV 89011

[Office of Military Legal Assistance](#)

August 24-25, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Armory, 2460 Fairview Dr. Carson City

[PVA Air Guns](#)

August 25, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

East Las Vegas Community Center

250 N. Eastern Ave.

ROVER Dates

To see a Veterans Service Officer.

Walk-in appointments are welcome, but can only be seen as time permits.

To make appointments for ROVER, and for times:

in the south, contact Mary Alley at 702-224-6025

in the north, contact Melissa Wilson at 775-321-4777

To coordinate/request a ROVER event, contact Janel Gibson at 702-486-5627

Veterans are advised to bring a copy of their DD-214 discharge document, current VA paperwork, medical information and banking account information. If the claim involves dependants, bring birth certificates, current and prior marriage certificates, divorce decrees, and social security numbers.

[Pahrump \(South\)](#)

Every Monday and Friday

1981 E. Calvada Blvd. #110.

[Hawthorne \(North\)](#)

Aug 2, 2018

775 Sierra Rd.

[Ely \(North\), Interactive Video](#)

Aug 3, 2018

2155 Bobcat Dr.

Ely

[Mesquite \(South\)](#)

Aug 7, 2018

840 Hafen Way.

[Beatty \(South\)](#)

Aug 9, 2018

100 A Ave. South

Beatty

[Battle Mountain \(North\), Interactive Video](#)

Aug 10, 2018

835 N. 2nd St.

Battle Mountain

[Silver Springs \(North\)](#)

Aug 14, 2018

2945 Fort Churchill St.

Silver Springs

[Austin \(North\)](#)

Aug 15, 2018

122 Main St.

Austin

[Tonopah \(South\)](#)

Aug 16, 2018

1120 Globe Mallow Lane.

Tonopah

[Mesquite \(South\)](#)

Aug 16, 2018

840 Hafen Way.

[Winnemucca \(North\), Interactive Video](#)

Aug 17, 2018

5490 Kluncy Canyon Rd.

Battle Mountain

[Wendover \(North\), Interactive Video](#)

Aug 24, 2018

2000 Elko Ave.

Wendover

[Gardnerville \(North\)](#)

Aug 28, 2018

1329 Waterloo Lane.

Gardnerville

[Laughlin \(South\)](#)

Aug 28, 2018

1510 Bruce Woodbury Dr.

Laughlin