



## October 2018

# NDVS Veterans Voice Newsletter

## Message from the Director

Fall is officially here, but sadly October 1<sup>st</sup> marks a grim anniversary for the U.S., Nevada and the Las Vegas community. Governor Sandoval is asking everyone to wear Vegas Strong shirts on October 1<sup>st</sup> to remember and honor those hurt or killed in the mass shooting during a concert on the strip.

The Governor said in a statement, "Our great State has shown the country and indeed the world what Vegas Strong is every day for nearly a year. The events of 1 October affected so many and I think it is only right to show the world again how Vegas Strong Nevada is on the one-year anniversary."

The Governor's Office is also reminding anyone who was present during the shooting to apply for the Nevada Crime Victims Program. Even those not physically hurt can participate in the program. The deadline to apply is October 1, 2018. For more information on this program click here:

[http://voc.nv.gov/VOC/VOC\\_Home/](http://voc.nv.gov/VOC/VOC_Home/)

As we mark this anniversary, this is a good time to remind anyone who is in crisis or is emotionally struggling to seek help and support. Resources are available for you. The Veterans Crisis Line is 1-800-273-8255, Press 1, or, visit:

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/?banners>

Our website at the Nevada Department of Veterans Services is also a place to find all kinds of resources at: [www.veterans.nv.gov](http://www.veterans.nv.gov) or go directly to our benefits and services page at: <http://www.veterans.nv.gov/benefits-and-services/>

This month the Nevada Department of Veterans Services will be hosting a Nevada Veterans Advocate workshop in Elko Nevada on October 20-21. It is a free two-day workshop with a third day, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, tailored specifically for Native American Veterans. The event will be held at the Red Lion Inn and Casino, 2065 Idaho Street, Elko, NV 89801. Register today at: <http://bit.ly/2NnXQZ3>. Travel scholarships are available to those who qualify.

Call 775-321-4708 or [kingm@veterans.nv.gov](mailto:kingm@veterans.nv.gov) for more information. ALL TRAVEL REQUESTS MUST BE PRE-APPROVED.

Speaking of upcoming events, the dedication ceremony for the Battle Born Memorial to Nevada's Fallen Military will be held on November 9, 2018. The reception starts at 9:00 a.m. inside the State Archives and Library Building, 100 North Stewart Street, Carson City. The ceremony will be held just outside at 10:00 a.m. Save your seat by registering here: <http://bit.ly/2PUuoKt>

On Veterans Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>, we will commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary marking the end to World War 1 at the Nevada State Veterans Home in Boulder City. We have lined up best-selling author and historian, Patrick O'Donnell to attend our event and sign copies of his most recent book, "The Unknowns: The Untold Story of America's Unknown Soldier and WWI's Most Decorated Heroes Who Brought Him Home." The ceremony will start at 1:30. There will be WWI memorabilia, static displays, costumes and more. You can save your seat by registering online: <http://bit.ly/2O0pa2p>

Finally, we plan to end this year strong with a celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Northern Nevada State Veterans Home in Sparks. This event will be held on December 17, 2018 with tours of the facility beginning at 4:30 p.m. with Governor Sandoval cutting the ribbon in a ceremony starting at 6:00 p.m. Reserve your seat by going here: <http://bit.ly/2PtpFzt>

As you can see, the next few months are going to be a busy time in the veterans' community. We will be honoring and serving veterans while reaching some new and very important milestones. Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,  
Kat Miller

# Honoring Nevada's Heroes



## **Two Familiar Faces in Northern Nevada Receive Recognition and Honor for Support and Service to Veterans**

Tom Spencer and Jim Forbus received special recognition for their selfless service.

In a special ceremony held in September, Governor Brian Sandoval was there to honor Spencer as Veteran of the Month and Forbus as Veteran Supporter of the Month.

Every time Spencer starts his truck, it is to serve veterans. Tom has assisted on numerous projects including: Veterans and Military Day at the Nevada Legislature 2017, Groundbreaking Ceremony planning for the new Northern Nevada State Veterans Home, Vietnam Veterans Commemorative events in Carson City, Memorial Day events at the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery. He currently serves as the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 388 President and supports all of their events in northern Nevada, including the March 29, 2017 National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Additionally, Spencer works with the United Veterans Legislative Council in support of legislation that involves bills for Active Duty Military as well as veterans.

Forbus dedicates a portion of his real estate sales with Krch Realty to Honor Flight. Honor Flight transports WWII, Korea, and Vietnam veterans to our nation's capital, at no cost to the veteran. He also volunteers countless hours to the organization to ensure its success. He visits and assists veterans in our community at their homes and transports them to local events. He is very passionate in assisting in the care and welfare of our nation's veterans.

The Veteran of the Month and Veteran Supporter of the Month were established to recognize those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in volunteer work in support of veterans and the military.

Nevada Appeal Reporter Steve Ranson did a terrific job profiling these two veterans. Check out: Veteran of the Month/Veteran Supporter of the Month at:

<https://www.nevadaappeal.com/news/local/vet-honored-for-making-lives-better/>

## Entertainer Tony Orlando and Air Force Veteran, POW Survivor Stephen Long A Melody of Friendship



By Chuck N. Baker

In August, retired Las Vegas Airman Major Stephen Long passed away from complications arising from Parkinson's disease. The 74-year-old veteran was an ex-prisoner of war in Hanoi, shot down in 1969 over Laos during the Vietnam War. The fighter pilot endured 1,490 days of captivity. After his release and return to the United States, he once again flew for the Air Force.

In the year 2000, Long was now a civilian and named Deputy Director of the Nevada Department of Veterans Services. Today hundreds of local veterans remember Long and the dedication with which he performed his duties assisting those who served. As a civilian, he enjoyed fishing, hiking, the outdoors, and music. Long's love of music and country are what sparked a long friendship with the beloved entertainer, Tony Orlando, who has a long list of hits to his name.

While still transitioning mentally from captivity to freedom, Long was part of group of ex-POWs who came to Texas to experience a performance in their honor. Orlando was one of the celebrities and recalls meeting Long. "He came to Dallas with all POWs and was sitting on the 50-yard line at a Bob Hope event welcoming home the former prisoners. He was not used to daylight yet, he was still adjusting to [having been] in a box. I was on stage doing 'Yellow Ribbon.' I said to Mr. Hope, 72 thousand people here, and the song is not even a hit yet! "

Orlando said the song at that time had sold many records, but it was not an instant international hit. Although it first garnered attention in the early 1970s, it was later during the hostage crisis with Iran that its popularity grew exponentially. "It didn't happen until the Iranian hostage crisis ... but many people had put yellow ribbons on their doors much earlier. How did I know that? "

Steve walked up to me and said, 'I want you to know that my family put yellow ribbons on their door.'"

Orlando said he struck up a conversation with the ex-POW. "I said I never had the opportunity to serve my country even though I tried to go to Vietnam and was rejected as 4F. I wanted to go and serve like the rest of my family. It was my ears, narrow auditory canals. They said I'd have trouble hearing orders on the battlefield." Regarding that exchange, Long's family would later say the airman had a quick wit and was always fast to respond to a comment or a statement. In this case, Long immediately had the appropriate response. Orlando recalled the moment. "He looked at me and he said 'You are serving your country.'" Orlando questioned him. "I said how? And he said, 'That song, 'I'm coming home, I've done my time ...you've already served your country.' I'll never forget those words."

Not long after, Orlando was opening at the famed Copacabana nightclub in New York and wanted to do something for Long. He offered to bring him to the Big Apple. "I asked him if I paid for him and his wife, (and I had enough money for about eight POWs total), and I paid for their airfare, would they come? I was so moved by him and the POWs." Long and others agreed to come. In an ironic nod to patriotism Orlando said he put them up at what was at the time the Americana Hotel on 53rd Street. "Oddly enough," Orlando mused.

The morning after the show, they all had breakfast at the hotel. Orlando paused for a moment, then described the meal. "Breakfast was waffles and pancakes. They piled and piled syrup on pancakes. Long in particular placed the food in his mouth and rolled it around his tongue, like a wine taster. His eyes opened up. He said with a mouthful, "Tony, this is so good." And from that day forward, I said to Steve, I'm going to dedicate [Yellow Ribbon] to veterans." And in every live performance since, Orlando salutes America's military and veterans with this song. He brings the house down with his heartfelt memory of Vietnam veteran Steve Long savoring waffles and pancakes. "I tell those in the audience, 'You guys never got a parade. I call them out.'"

In more recent years his veterans' audience has largely been made up of those who served in Desert Storm. Orlando has been performing annual patriotic shows in Branson, Missouri each November that raise charitable funds for veterans. The first year at Branson, Orlando said he asked Long if the veterans would come to see the show. "And 300 and their wives and friends showed up on their own, on their own dime. Veterans come every single year since then."

Today he said thousands attend the performance each year. He explained that he began those concerts some 10 years before the Wounded Warriors project came to be and several years after Desert Storm. "There was no talk about veterans [at that time]. Branson created an awareness of veterans. It's raised millions of dollars."

"Steve Long became a brother, a friend; he never missed a year coming to Branson. I'm close to his wife Kathy and I'm like an uncle to daughter Katie. Steve and I became the closest friends. He gave me the feeling that I did serve my country. I thank him to this day that he made me feel that way. He became my family, I became his family. We were as close as any relative, a father, a mother, a sister or brother. When he passed a piece of me passed."

In a strange twist, the friendship was almost grounded before it was able to takeoff. After their first meeting in the 1970s, Orlando made it a point to seek out Long some time later. "I was in Las Vegas and went to Nellis Air Force Base and they said, 'We don't know a Stephen Long.' I said, 'Come on you guys, he came home with the rest of them.'" But personnel on the base all claimed they had no records of anyone by that name. "All of a sudden I got a phone call, at the Riviera Hotel." It was Steve Long. He told Orlando, "The reason you couldn't find me was because I was working at [Top Secret] Area 51, teaching men to fly the Stealth bomber. That's why you couldn't find me. I was busy working for the country."

There is a side story Orlando is fond of telling. In Texas where he first met Long he said to Bob Hope, "Bob, did you see that one POW, sitting and not clapping?" Hope acknowledged. Orlando walked up to the veteran and explained that he had noticed he wasn't applauding after each song. Did he not enjoy the music? The veteran replied, "Tony, I'm sorry. My name is John McCain. My arms are torn out of my socket. But what you didn't see is my big toe tapping, keeping time." McCain would go on to become a U.S. Senator and presidential candidate years later, despite the lack of full movement of his arms due to the torture he endured in North Vietnam. Ironically, he and Long died within days of each other.

Orlando learned of Long's passing when Kathy Long called him to report the sad news. "The last time I saw Steve, we held hands the whole time. It was last April," Orlando said.

Orlando said the one thing that stands out today was watching the ex-POWs enjoying pancakes and waffles. He said he told Long, "I will never taste a waffle like you tasted a waffle, I will never taste maple syrup like you tasted maple syrup. A flower will never smell as good as it smells to you. A handshake, everything you do from now on will be intense. In a way I am envious that I will never know life like you will." Orlando said Long reached over and hugged him.

Orlando found himself deeply impressed and amazed with the tenacity and love of country that Long demonstrated. "This man, who was tortured, comes home and re-enlists, and becomes a pilot teacher. He said he would do it again and again. This is typical of those who serve our country and especially those who were POWs. Steve was my American hero who became my best friend."



## Spotlight Focuses on Beloved Long-Time Vegas Musician Army Veteran Joe Vento



By Chuck N. Baker

At the Las Vegas City Council meeting this past August, attendees packed the chamber and sat through a lengthy, dry agenda. All-in-all, it was a typical City Council meeting, on a sunny day, in the bustling town of desert-built casinos. But for at least one resident, it was a special day. Joe Vento was named Citizen of the Month.

For the nearly a century, Army veteran and musician Vento has tickled the ivories and squeezed the accordion in a career that has taken him to Hollywood and other far-flung locales of the entertainment world. City Councilman Bob Coffin, a long-time friend of Vento, saw fit to have the civic body honor the musician who has seemingly been in professional music since, at least the way he jokingly tells it, "the Jurassic Period."

The playlist in Vento's mind is endless. Mention a song, virtually any pop song, and in an instant the melody, the harmony and the bass line all come together on the eighty-eights. On a really good night, he'll also belt out a few lines of the lyrics, but emphasized, "I play the piano and I mostly let others do the singing."

Until recently he could be found one or two nights a week in the lobby at the off-Strip Royal Resort hotel, playing for tips. Due to his current health, he doesn't get out as much as he used to and, when he does, it's inevitable that hotel guests and restaurant patrons are drawn to his music. Short of having a tin ear, they will start singing along with Vento's playing, joining in sometimes for just one song, sometimes several songs. If someone is off a key or two, Vento pays no attention and keeps the chords coming.

Most nights he wears a cap that announces that he is a veteran. "I served in World War Two, Korea and Vietnam," he proudly states. "I was a Lieutenant Colonel." When asked what he did in the service, his answer is always Spartan in nature. "I was in intelligence," is his reply. And it's futile to attempt to have him go any further. He intimates that his work was so secret he still is unable to discuss it. If anyone continues to ask, he'll merely say, "What song would you like to hear next?" Vento's official biography states that in WWII he was assigned to Special Services and played in the U.S. Army Band.

Over the years he backed Frank Sinatra and members of the Rat Pack, Tony Bennett, the Mills Brothers, Count Basie and many, many others. He said he also scored uncredited incidental music for various film productions and made appearances as a musician in numerous motion pictures.

At the City Hall ceremony, Vento was in a wheelchair. His mind was sharp and like his prolific fingers, his verbal pronouncements were strong. But his legs have gotten weak in recent years and his walking ability has suffered. At the microphone, Councilman Coffin praised his friend and indicated he was unsure about Vento's age. Vento has said he often told people he was younger than he was for business reasons. He may have been a senior citizen, but he didn't want agents, producers and managers to know just how senior.

Mayor Carolyn Goodman and other council members took turns praising Vento and posing for photographs with him. Few doubt that he is somewhere between 95 and 100. Even without a keyboard present, it was a musical moment. Entertainer Billy Joel wrote "The Piano Man" about himself, but it could easily be about Joe Vento: "Sing us a song, you're the piano man ... and you've got us feelin' alright."

## World War II Veteran Celebrates 100th Plus Birthday at Reno-Sparks Indian Colony



By Stacy Montooth, Public Relations/Community Relations, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony

When you reach the century mark, birthday celebrations can come with some twists. In the case of WWII veteran Thomas McGinty, his family is certain he celebrated his 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday last month in September. However, his official United States of America certification of military service indicates he turned 101 years old. Despite the discrepancy, it didn't diminish the celebration surrounding his special day and may have actually added to the significance of the personal milestone. Even local media members turned out to his birthday bash.

Immersed in a culture which pays great reverence to its elders and even greater reverence to its elders who have served in the military, the entire Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC) honored McGinty at the Colony's Senior Center.

McGinty joined the U.S. Army in April 22, 1941, just about eight months before the bombing of an American fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Corporal McGinty was honorably discharged on December 5, 1945.

At this special birthday celebration, brunch, along with a birthday cake was served. Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Chairman Arlan D. Melendez read a proclamation for McGinty and about 35 students from the Colony's Head Start classes lead a rousing rendition of Happy Birthday!

The RSIC was established in 1917 with the Bureau of Indian Affairs purchase of 20 acres which became the core of Colony. In 1926, the addition of a contiguous parcel increased the land base to 28.8 acres.

The first formal council of the RSIC was organized in 1934, and the election for the adoption of the Constitution was held on December 16, 1935. Located in Reno, Nevada, the RSIC consists of more than 1,150 members from three Great Basin Tribes (the Paiute, the Shoshone, and the Washoe) and provides essential services to more than 7,000 Natives.

Today, the reservation lands consist of the original twenty-eight-acre Colony located in central west Reno and another 15,263 acres in Hungry Valley, which is nineteen miles north of the Colony and west of Spanish Springs, Nevada, nestled in scenic Eagle Canyon.

Learn more at: [www.rsic.org](http://www.rsic.org)

## City of Henderson Accepting Applications Military Recognition Banner Program



By Debra Haskell, Public Relations Coordinator, City of Henderson

The City of Henderson continues the tradition of honoring its heroes with banners bearing the name, rank and image of an active military serviceperson with ties to the community.

Applications are being accepted for the City's Military Recognition Banner Program, which honors the brave men and women currently serving in the United States Armed Forces. The street banners will be displayed starting around Veterans Day. The application deadline is October 8, 2018.

Henderson residents, businesses and organizations may nominate an honoree and sponsor a street banner for \$150 (includes banner printing and installation). The honoree must be a Henderson resident or the immediate family member of a Henderson resident and must be an active duty member in good standing. There is a limit of one banner per serviceperson.

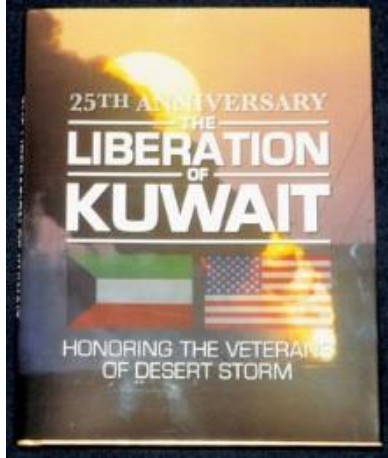
The street banners will be installed around the Veterans Day holiday and displayed for a year. Once the banners are removed following the display period, the serviceperson will be honored at a ceremony hosted by the City of Henderson.

Nomination forms are available by emailing [Marketing@cityofhenderson.com](mailto:Marketing@cityofhenderson.com) or visiting [www.cityofhenderson.com](http://www.cityofhenderson.com)

An official color military photo of the honoree in their formal military dress uniform is required in a 5" x 7" or larger original photograph or a high-resolution (300 dpi) JPEG file format on disc/USB drive or emailed with the completed nomination form to [Marketing@cityofhenderson.com](mailto:Marketing@cityofhenderson.com)

Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

## Gulf War Veteran? Free Gift for You!

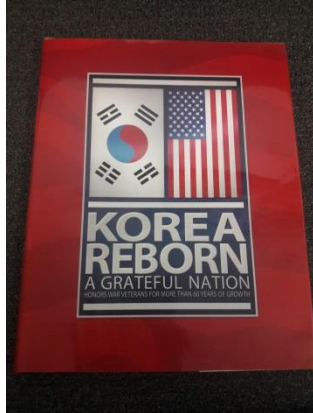


The State of Kuwait is providing a special "thank you" to the men and women who served in Operation Desert Storm. Gulf War veterans may receive a free commemorative, first-edition book, *The Liberation of Kuwait*. It includes a companion, feature-length documentary on DVD. The set retails for \$49.95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

## 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 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](mailto: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

## **Nevada State Veterans Home Receives 2018 HealthInsight Quality Award Sixth Year in a Row**



(Boulder City, NV) – HealthInsight has once again recognized the Nevada State Veterans Nursing Home (NSVH) for excellence in clinical quality and patient care.

For a sixth year in a row, NSVH has been chosen to receive the HealthInsight Quality Award. It recognizes high-performing health care provider organizations in states in which HealthInsight serves as the contractor for the Medicare program's Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization. The Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) oversees the veteran's home, located in Boulder City, Nevada.

NDVS Director Kat Miller said, "We are extremely honored to once again receive HealthInsight's highest award." She added, "This not only demonstrates our sustained commitment to providing Nevada's veterans with excellence and quality care, but underscores our passion in doing so. Congratulations to our home Administrator and her staff for continued excellence in care to our veterans."

NSVH is one of only six skilled nursing care facilities across Nevada to receive this distinguished honor this year. Administrator Linda Gelingher said, "We are very honored to receive this prestigious award for our sixth consecutive year showing that we are deeply committed to providing the highest quality of care to our veterans that they so deserve. It is also heartwarming for our staff to be acknowledged for the hard work they do each and every day, for their commitment in honoring and serving our veterans."

Additionally, the home has recently received another significant distinction. It has maintained the highest rating possible of 5-Stars by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The CMS Quality Rating System helps consumers compare nursing homes more easily and identify facilities that provide excellence in care.

The NSVH is a state-owned and operated skilled nursing home that can accommodate up to 180 residents, including veterans, their spouse and Gold Star parents. The facility provides 24-hour nursing care and offers a variety of programs and services designed to enhance the overall quality of day-to-day life for our residents. The NSVH is currently accepting applications for new residents. For more information, visit: <http://veterans.nv.gov/benefits-and-services/nevada-state-veterans-home-boulder-city-nv/> or call (702) 332-6784.

To meet the criteria for the Nursing Home Quality Award, a facility must rank in the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of all facilities in the state based on 15 long-stay quality measures reported on Medicare's Nursing Home Compare website. The facility also must have at least a 3-Star rating on Nursing Home Compare. For more on the criteria, visit <https://healthinsight.org/quality-awards>

The HealthInsight Quality Award Program was launched in September 2004 to promote transparency in health care. As defined by the Institute of Medicine, a transparent health care system is "accountable to the public, works openly, makes results known and builds trust through disclosure." By using publicly available quality data to identify high-performing providers and publicizing the results, HealthInsight aims to help providers improve health care and help patients become more active and informed participants in their own care.

## It's Not Only Veterans Groups That Help the VA



By Chuck N. Baker

(Las Vegas) — Being hospitalized can sometimes lead to days of loneliness. To help counter that, VA and other government employees do what they can to assist veterans in VA facilities and keep their spirits high. In addition, many outside veterans groups make regular visits to medical facilities and engage patients in conversation as well as present them with small toiletry items and reading material. Often those making the visits were once VA patients themselves, and they know first-hand how much interaction can mean to those who are bedridden.

There are several non-veteran, non-profit service groups that are charged with helping the veterans community. One such group is the Masonic Service Association, whose members are more generally known as Masons.

Masons can be found helping others virtually all over the world. When natural catastrophes arise such as volcanoes, floods, hurricanes and related weather events, Masons are there to help in many ways. But the Hospital Visitation Program is considered exceptional by Masonic leaders. According to a statement on their official website, "... the Service Association deems this program their major relief work."

In Southern Nevada, the Mason Program Coordinator is Michael J. Clark. He is quick to point out that he and his other volunteers engage in much more than just visitations to the disabled and lonely patients at the VA, and in state veterans homes such as the one in Boulder City, as well as extended care facilities. "We render personal services to all our sons and brothers, Masons and

non-Masons alike, who need someone to turn to for encouragement and to make life a little more pleasant," he said.

The history of the Masonic Service Association goes back to WWI. Clark explained that during the First World War, the Masons approached the federal government and offered support for American troops. It had been determined that the organization was in a position to serve a useful and patriotic purpose helping the nation's armed forces. But the government did not want to work with 49 separate Masonic Grand Lodges, one in each state. "So the Masonic Service Association was formed on a national scale and became the one organization the government could deal with," Clark said. In time the association developed four basic functions that are still in force today. In descending order they are Education/Publications, VA Hospital Visitation, Disaster Relief and Public/Media Relations. When WWII began, the Masons opened service centers for the military. Similar to USO facilities, the centers featured food, music and dancing, often providing the last touch of home for troops before deploying overseas. When the war ended, the centers were closed.

Clark pointed out that although their work is serious, Masons can laugh at themselves and often do. The TV series "The Simpsons" spoofed the Masons by creating the fictional "Stonecutters Lodge." At the end of the lodge meeting, the characters sang, "Who controls the British Crown? Who keeps the metric system down? Who Keeps Atlantis off the maps? Who keeps Martians under wraps? We do! We Do!"

Clark said that all are welcome to attend the association's annual BBQ and car show in the parking lot of the VA clinic on Pecos Road in North Las Vegas. It's set for November 10 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

And he really means all are welcome. Even the Simpsons are invited.

## Vegas PBS Supports Mental Health, Suicide Intervention



By Chuck N. Baker

(Las Vegas) — "Mental illness affects everybody."

That is one message that was driven home to a group of local residents who attended the Mental Health Forum presented by Vegas PBS in late September. There was an advance showing of a Channel 10 television show hosted by Casey Smith, who interviewed a panel of health experts. Several of those experts, as well as others, also answered questions in person at the forum, held at the station's Educational and Technology Campus on Flamingo Road.

The initial program zeroed in on youth, and all involved agreed that early intervention is crucial to heading off negative thoughts, including suicide. As the forum progressed, adult intervention was also addressed. Several short film clips were shown of an actual case involving mental health and suicide. The story was of one Linda Bishop of New Hampshire, who began showing negative psychological signs at a young age. By the time she was an adult, things had gotten worse. But like many with mental problems, she was able to project a sense of a calm and healthy outlook when being interviewed by professionals in the medical field. Her family members knew she had a problem(s), but Bishop was always able to conceal her illness when being interviewed by doctors, judges or others who might have been able to provide assistance.

Moderator Matthew Cox spoke for the professionals in attendance when he said, "Some people feel there is nowhere to turn" and as a result, do not seek help even if they realize they need it. Suicide is a problem for veterans and non-veterans across the nation, and in Nevada especially. In the Silver State, suicide is the seventh-leading cause of death according to the Center for Disease Control. But there are several reasons why those afflicted tend to avoid seeking assistance. Individuals understand that admitting to mental problems can create a stigma around them. Some feel that if they say they have problems,

their freedom will be taken away. Others think that the way they view things is normal, and “this is how I’m supposed to live my life,” even if their plans often end up badly.

A sister of Bishop shown in film clips talked about how she has diabetes, and she knows she has to take medications to keep it under control. Her illness is physical in nature. Her sister and others with psychological problems had mental illness, and mental illness needs to be treated regularly just as physical illness does. One of the professionals at the forum agreed and pointed out that mental illness can be traced to a bodily organ — the brain. It needs regularly scheduled treatment. Linda Bishop did not seek treatment. She was found deceased in an abandoned home where she had existed mainly by eating apples that grew on a nearby tree. The entire film, entitled “God Knows Where I Am,” will premiere on Vegas PBS Monday, October 15, at 9 p.m.

Several private health providers were present and handed out literature about their services. For example, Healthy Minds is a mental health clinic that provides comprehensive services to children, adults and families. The Bemer Group has a program that focuses on positive blood flow, which among other things helps mental concentration and acuity. Serenity Mental Health offers a multitude of treatments including individual therapy, day treatment, substance abuse and medication management.

Vegas PBS General Manager Tom Axtel told the audience that mental health organizations are community partners with PBS. One agency PBS supports is the Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT), created to provide crisis intervention and support to Nevada families dealing with behavioral or mental health problems. In the past, families have had no choice but to go to the emergency room due to lack of resources or knowledge of available resources. The MCRT is mobile and comes to families. It also provides help over the phone.

The service supports youth (and their families) under the age of 18 showing signs of behavioral or mental health issues. Those issues might pose a threat to the child’s stability within their home, school or community. Some issues can include anger, self-injury, seeing or hearing things, depression and suicidal or homicidal thoughts or behavior. In Southern Nevada, the MCRT number is (702) 486-7865. In Northern Nevada, call (775) 688-1670. In rural Nevada, dial (702) 486-7865.

# Programs and Services

## Blind Veteran on Tough River Challenge: "I'll Never Say I Can't Again"



By Chuck N. Baker

The Colorado River touches Nevada's Lake Mead and heads south through Arizona, through the Grand Canyon. This is where a group of battle-trained veterans loaded up in their kayaks last month to ride the choppy waters and punch through 226 miles of some of the most difficult rapids in the United States. While these veterans are battle-trained and brave, their adventure poses a unique challenge because some are blind.

Members of Team River Runner (TRR) and the Blinded Veterans Association joined together for a historic venture. Five blind veterans kayaked down the Colorado River under the umbrella of Operation Peer Support, a program for Gulf War I and II era veterans.

Four of the men served in the Army and one served in the Navy. Prior to their trip, the participants invested two years training with experts from the non-profit TRR that promotes kayaking and team water recreational programs for disabled veterans.

The veteran guide team was led by Dave Robey, a retired Navy captain and the program director. Co-directing was blinded veteran Lonnie Bedwell. "These veterans demonstrated to the public their accomplishments, inspiring others with disabilities to continue to participate in activities," Bedwell said.

Brian Harris is a blinded Army corporal who served in Iraq. One of the five veterans who took part in the kayaking, he attended the recent Blind Veterans Association national convention in Sparks. In an interview at the Nugget Hotel, he discussed his preparation for the Colorado River excursion. It began when he

joined the BVA. "The BVA was a place I was able to fit," he said, referring to his loss of sight caused by an enemy explosion. "I started doing adaptive sports, including skydiving. I did rappelling, snowboarding, scuba diving."

Bedwell was a friend of Harri, and he got him into kayaking, initially traversing several somewhat smaller waterways. So Harris had some prior experience, but in the pre-Grand Canyon Sparks interview he said, "I feel the Colorado is going to be the most challenging." When it was over, he confided to friends that his prediction was correct.

Clothing makes the man, and when one is kayaking, that is no exception. "We wear helmets, appropriate clothing, and I wear a mask 'cause I don't like water shooting up my nose," Harris said. Some of the participants attach GoPro cameras to their headgear to capture hands-free video.

The veterans and their guides showed great resilience paddling for 12 days. The experience was empowering for all. It demonstrated to those following the trip's progress, as well as to themselves, that they are capable of incredible feats. Travis Fugate, a blind veteran, said "I don't think I will ever say 'I can't' again."

Participants Eric Carlson and Steve Baskis jointly commented, "What we learned on this trip is you don't have to change the world to accommodate people with disabilities. Nor do most of them want that. We need to change our attitude and realize they are capable." Those statements follow what TRR believes, that every wounded and disabled veteran deserve the opportunity to embrace new challenges, invoke leadership and promote camaraderie.

While Harris and the others were getting soaked (with both water and fun), two veterans from Minden were having fun of their own soaring an engine-less glider more than 76,000 feet above the Andes in Argentina. Reports said they flew higher than the highest recorded flight of the vintage U2 spy plane.

Mindenites Jim Payne and Tim Gardner said their flight of the Perlan 2 experimental glider was the second highest flying aircraft to achieve sustained flight within the earth's atmosphere. In a news release, the men stated that their pressurized glider is designed to soar as high as 90,000 feet. They said their flight passed the Armstrong Line, the point in the atmosphere above which an unprotected human's blood will boil without pressurization.

Ed Warnock, CEO of the Perlan Project, said "Our victory and whatever other milestones we achieve this year are testament to a pioneering spirit of



exploration that runs through everyone on the project and through the organizations that support us.”

The glider was built in Oregon and is home-based in Minden. A few of the many sponsors include at least one company with a Nevada connection — SoaringNV, a flight school based in Minden in Douglas County. Another sponsor company with exclusive products available in Nevada cyclist shops is Garmin, a manufacturer of multisport GPS watches. On the military side, Argentina’s Air Force Director-General of Research and Development is an active supporter.

Payne said he had been a military test pilot and is retired from Southern California’s aerospace industry. He moved to Minden, 45 miles south of Reno. The glider flights were conducted over El Calafate in Argentina because of positive weather patterns that occur there. The 2,000-pound Perfan 2 has an 84-foot wingspan and an emergency parachute that can lower the aircraft safely to the ground. If that had happened over the Colorado River, the kayaking members of the Blinded Veterans Association surely would have been pleased to give the pilots a lift to dry land!

Terrific story by the Colorado Sun on this event. Just click the link:

<https://coloradosun.com/2018/09/24/blind-kayakers-grand-canyon-trip/>

## **Looking for Information on Mesothelioma?**

There is a resource at your fingertips if you are in need of information about Mesothelioma. [www.Mesothelioma.net](http://www.Mesothelioma.net) has a large section of its website dedicated to veterans whose lives have been impacted by this disease.

It is the goal of the Mesothelioma organization to help find financial assistance for veterans in need to assist with their treatment. [Mesothelioma.net](http://Mesothelioma.net) also has well over 4,000 pages of cancer information regarding firefighter health and safety, scholarship opportunities, emerging alternative therapies/treatments, and much more. We hope you find value in our information!

## **VA-HUD VASH Homeless Stand Down in Reno**

Homeless veterans in Reno received a helping hand up last month in the annual Reno Homeless Veterans Stand Down. It's a one-stop shop approach to providing help, resources and services to veterans in need of assistance. They receive connections to VA Health screenings, Social Security benefits counseling, VA benefits claims assistance, along with food, a free haircut and much more.

A group of Vietnam veterans organized the first Homeless Veterans Stand Down back in 1988. Since then, it has spread across the nation becoming an effective tool in reaching homeless veterans living on the streets and in need of assistance.

This year, one lucky veteran received the surprise of his life! It was a set of keys that will change his life.

Take a look by clicking the link. (Warning, grab a tissue!)

<https://mynews4.com/news/local/reno-homeless-veterans-stand-down>

# News You Can Use

## Veterans' Information and Conversation Town Hall Draws Crowd in Pahrump



By Chuck N. Baker

Even though it was the middle of week, more than 100 veterans, their family members or loved ones packed into the Bob Ruud Community Center. Extra chairs had to be pulled to the middle of the community center as the crowd gathered to join a conversation about issues of interest to Pahrump veterans.

The unincorporated area has a part-time Veteran Service Officer and a VA Health Clinic. Still, many veterans are not aware of all the benefits offered to them by the State of Nevada and the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

One topic that surfaced was the upcoming legislative session in Nevada. Earlier this year in March 2018, the Nevada Department of Veterans Services hosted a Veterans Legislative Symposium in both the northern and southern parts of the State. The United Veterans Legislative Counsel (UVLC) assisted in helping veterans attending the event, identify and then prioritize issues or challenges that could be addressed by Nevada lawmakers. One of the high priority issues that surfaced is providing the communities of Fallon and Pahrump with a full-time Veteran Service Officer.

Department Director Kat Miller urged those attending to participate in hearings and the process involving proposed legislation that have been identified as being important to veterans. Backing up that statement was Assemblyman James Oscarson, who pointed out that even if individuals can't come to the office of an elected official, phone calls and letters do "make a difference." He drove home the fact Nevada has a "citizens' legislature" consisting of men and women who are elected to office on a part-time basis. He explained Nevada lawmakers live and work in the communities they serve and are very

approachable. In painting a picture of some of the work conditions in which they operate, he said, "We go up in freezing cold for 120 days ... but there is special spirit when [veterans] are there." He added that when veterans' bills are brought up for votes, they tend to pass 100 percent, or almost 100 percent.

He urged veterans and their families to, "Let your voices be heard."

He did caution the crowd there is a right way and a wrong way to approach legislators — courtesy counts. He praised the VA clinic in town and suggested veterans stop by and visit adding, "Have a donut with them." He took a moment to praise the VA's Chief of Staff, Dr. Ramu Komanduri, whose office is at the VA Clinic in North Las Vegas. He described Komanduri as "a great man," and his office "always responds" when asked questions. Oscarson will be leaving office soon, and he closed his comments to the group with a heartfelt message: "It's been an honor and pleasure to serve you all."

Fred Wagar, the Deputy Director under Miller, spoke about the Veterans Advocacy Support Team (VAST) and how its members help others who need information about benefits. He also had praise for Brandi Matheny, Pahrump's part-time Veteran Service Officer. Moving on to discuss the Southern Nevada Veterans Cemetery in Boulder City, he reported as many as 10 interments a day are performed there. He also said that the Veterans Cemetery in Fernley stays very busy as well.

Both Miller and Wagar discussed the Veterans Home in Boulder City, noting it is a Five-Star skilled nursing facility. They also indicated construction of a Veterans Home in the north was on target and scheduled for a December 17, 2018 ribbon cutting. Miller pointed out "every veteran in this room earned their benefits" and could potentially be eligible to be residents at one of the homes, when they reach the right age and meet the qualifications.

VAST Director Pieter M. Droog encouraged veterans to become Nevada Veterans Advocates in order to assist veterans in filing VA claims. He said Matheny, the part-time service officer in Pahrump, filed 46 claims with the VA last month, 13 of which were brand new claims, not appeals. He smiled and asked the audience if Matheny has a "phenomenal coffee pot" in her office! Adding, "Perhaps she has brownies over there?" He also admonished the audience demanding, "Leave her alone!" He said once a claim is submitted, claimants should not call her every few days to ask about the status of the paperwork. He explained, "When she is handling your call, she can't help others

at the same time!" He assured them, "When there is movement on your claim, Brandi will contact you."

Women Veteran Program Coordinator Janel Gibson is helping female veterans obtain their benefits and understand the health care resources that are available to women veterans as well.

Nye County Assessor Sheree Stringer also attended the event. Eligible veterans can contact her office in Pahrump to apply for deductions on property tax. Her office may be reached in Tonopah at 775-482-8174 or in Pahrump at

775-751-7060 or visit the Nye County Assessor's Office website at <http://www.co.nye.nv.us/267/Assessor>

## **Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Announces New VISN Director – John Brandecker Brings Leadership and Proven Experience to VA Sierra Pacific Network**



By Chuck Ramey, Public Affairs Officer, VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System  
The Department of Veterans Affairs is pleased to announce the appointment of John A. Brandecker, MBA, MPH, as the new Director of the VA Sierra Pacific Network (VISN 21) in Vallejo, California. Mr. Brandecker will oversee delivery of health care at seven major health care systems in northern California, Nevada, Hawaii and the Pacific. VISN 21 has an operating budget of \$3.9 billion and has more than 14,300 employees.

“We are excited to bring Mr. Brandecker on board as the new Director of the VA Sierra Pacific Network,” said Steve Young, VHA Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management. “His sound leadership qualities and proven experience will be valuable assets for the facility, the employees and volunteers, and most importantly, for the Veterans we are honored to serve. We anticipate he will begin his appointment within the next four to six weeks.

For the past five years, Mr. Brandecker has served as the Medical Center Director at the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, one of the highest complexity medical centers in the 160-hospital VA Health System. In this capacity, he had full ownership and accountability for all activity related to medical center operations along with four Community Based Outpatient Clinics. The McGuire VA Medical Center has 408 operating beds providing care to nearly 60,000 veterans in a 52-county area with more than 3,300 employees.

Prior to joining VA, Mr. Brandecker served in several executive positions in the private sector including Associate Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of UT Southwestern Hospitals in Dallas; Senior Vice President of Jackson Health

System and Chief Administrative Officer for Holtz Children's Hospital and Jackson Memorial Women's Hospital Center in Miami; Associate Hospital Director at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics; Executive Director, University of Iowa Children's Hospital in Iowa City; Vice-President, University of Chicago Hospitals and Health System; and Director, Comer Children's Hospital in Chicago. He also served as a System Administrative Director and Chief Financial Officer in the North-Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System in North Hyde Park, New York, as well as the Director of Internal Management Services at Columbia University in New York City.

Mr. Brandecker holds a Master's in Business Administration from St. John's University in Queens, New York and a Master's in Public Health from Columbia University.



# Education and Employment

## Free Nevada Veterans Advocate Workshop in Elko Native American Veterans Claims Assistance Too



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!

**ATTENTION NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS!**

On Monday, October 22, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Native American Veterans have the opportunity for additional claims assistance. Travel scholarships are available to those who qualify. Contact [kingm@veterans.nv.gov](mailto:kingm@veterans.nv.gov) to learn more. ALL TRAVEL REQUESTS MUST BE PRE-APPROVED.

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 others, not just those attending the Native American portion of the workshop. Must be traveling more than 75 miles

from the event. Please contact [kingm@veterans.nv.gov](mailto: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

## Happy Birthday U.S. Navy!



You may find this bit of history surprising. "Military Benefits info" writes; "The official birthday of the United States Navy is October 13, 1775. Back then, it was known as the Continental Navy and considered a small fleet of ships patrolling to intercept ships sent to resupply British Army troops at or near the Colonies.

The creation of this fleet was not without controversy. In fact, it was hotly debated for 11 days in the Continental Congress. According to the official website of the U.S. Navy, some in that debate were convinced that having a standing navy was "the maddest idea in the world."

Read more: <https://militarybenefits.info/us-navy-birthday/#ixzz5RmfSqx3U>

This year the Navy's birthday is Saturday, October 13, 2018.

Military.com also has some interesting insights on the Navy's birthday.

<https://www.military.com/navy-birthday>

The U.S Navy also has a pretty impressive YouTube Channel. Enjoy:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/usnavy>

## October 26 Is National Day of the Deployed



National Day of the Deployed honors all of the brave men and woman who have been deployed, are sacrificing, or have sacrificed their lives to defend our country. The day also acknowledges their families, who are separated from them during deployment, and the sacrifices they make in order for their family members to serve our country.

This link gives great suggestions on how to observe this day and honor the men and women serving us:

<https://milsponsefest.com/national-day-of-the-deployed/>

## Operation Urgent Fury — Grenada



This month marks the anniversary of Operation Urgent Fury – Grenada. In the predawn darkness of October 25, 1983, helicopters loaded with heavily armed Marines lifted off the amphibious assault ship USS Guam (LPH-9) and headed west toward the cloud-draped mountains of the island of Grenada. The Marine Corps Association and Foundation's Otto Kreisher vividly shares his recollection here:

<https://www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/operation-urgent-fury-grenada>

## **U.S. Navy Day Is Coming Up**

Navy Day is observed annually on October 27. It is a day to salute all of the women and men who have served, both past and present, in the United States Navy. The United States Navy (USN) is the naval warfare service branch of the United States Armed Forces and one of the seven uniformed services of the United States.

Millard Fillmore's Bathtub (Yes! That is the website!) reminds you to fly your flag to honor the day! The website also shares some pretty cool posters! Check them out here:

<https://timpanogos.wordpress.com/2017/10/27/fly-your-flag-for-navy-day-october-27-2017/>

# Mark Your Calendar

## Mark Your Calendar – October 2018

### [Fashion Meets Fun Champagne Luncheon and Fashion Show](#)

October 4, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
Peppermill Resort Casino, Capri Ballroom  
2707 S Virginia St, Reno, NV 89502

### [WAVE Monument Unveiling](#)

October 6, Starting at noon  
Historic Minden Courthouse  
1616 8th St, Minden, NV 89423

### [Veterans Services Fair](#)

October 10, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
Dula Gymnasium  
441 E. Bonanza Ave. Las Vegas, NV 89101

### [Office of Military Legal Assistance Event](#)

October 12 – 13, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
Las Vegas VA Medical Center  
6900 N. Pecos Rd. N. Las Vegas, NV 89086

### [VA Sierra Nevada HCS Pregnancy and Infant Loss Service of Remembrance for Veterans and Family Members](#)

October 17, Starting at 12:00 noon  
VA Sierra Nevada HCS  
975 Kirman Ave. Reno, NV 89502

### [Pahrump Veterans Stand Down](#)

October 19, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
Home Depot Parking Lot  
301 N. Hwy 160, Pahrump, NV 89060

### [FREE 2018 Nevada Veterans Advocate Training and Native American Workshop](#)

October 20-22, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM every day  
2065 Idaho Street  
Elko, NV 89801



[Veterans Film and TV Showcase](#)

October 20, Starting at 4:00 PM  
Rio Hotel and Casino  
3700 West Flamingo Road  
Las Vegas, NV 89103

[First Annual Girls Night Out for First Responders and Veterans](#)

October 20, 5:00 PM – 11:30 PM  
Silver Legacy Resort Casino  
407 North Virginia Street  
Reno, NV 89501

[Operation Camo Christmas Fundraiser Mixer](#)

October 23, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM  
Sparks Metalcrafters  
22 Hardy Dr. Sparks, NV 89431

[Nellis AFB Veteran Career Fair](#)

October 25, Starting at 11:00 AM  
Community Commons  
4311 Washington Blvd, Bldg. 312  
Las Vegas, NV 89115

Veterans Services Commission Meeting  
October 25, Starting at 9:30 AM  
NDVS Headquarters  
6630 S. McCarran Blvd, Building C, Suite 204, Reno

[Dedication Ceremony for the Battle Born Memorial to Nevada's Fallen](#)

November 9, Starting at 9:00 AM  
State Archives and Library Building  
100 North Stewart Street, Carson City

[WWI 100th Anniversary Veterans Day Event](#)

November 11, Starting at 1:30 PM  
Nevada State Veterans Home  
100 Veterans Memorial Dr. Boulder City.

[Northern Nevada State Veterans Home \(NNSVH\) Ribbon-Cutting](#)

December 12, Starting at 4:30 PM

NNSVH

36 Battle Born Way, Sparks

**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.

[Mesquite \(South\)](#)

Oct 2, 2018

840 Hafen Way.

[Hawthorne \(North\)](#)

Oct 10, 2018

775 Sierra Rd.

[Beatty \(South\)](#)

Oct 11, 2018

100 A Ave. South

Beatty

[Tonopah \(South\)](#)

Oct 18, 2018

1120 Globe Mallow Lane.

Tonopah

[Mesquite \(South\)](#)

Oct 18, 2018

840 Hafen Way.

[Laughlin \(South\)](#)

Oct 23, 2018

1510 Bruce Woodbury Dr.

Laughlin

[Gardnerville \(North\)](#)

Oct 24, 2018

1329 Waterloo Lane.

Gardnerville