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## VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ January/February 2017

### Note from the Director

Greetings! We made it through the winter months of January and February and now spring is right around the corner. Although critters (as we say in Oklahoma) may hibernate during the winter months, our VA Tribal Government Relations team definitely did not hibernate as we hit the ground running into 2017.

Our nation commemorated the inauguration of a new President and new administration, we bid farewell to our former leadership and political colleagues, and welcomed Dr. David Shulkin, VA's former Undersecretary of Veterans Affairs for Health to his new role as Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. We look forward to supporting Secretary Shulkin and his leadership team who will be tenacious advocates for ensuring our Veterans have timely access to quality care and ensuring our Veterans are treated by VA employees with the kindness and respect that they so well deserve. We are happy to report that less than 24 hours on the job, Secretary Shulkin met with Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal Chairwoman Frances Charles and Councilman Joe Turrey here in Washington, D.C. to hear specific concerns and requests they had regarding VA issues where the tribe is located in Washington State. The Secretary is committed to continuing to respect and honor the government-to-government relationship between the United States and tribal governments, and we look forward to supporting his future engagements with tribal leaders, Veterans and service providers not only through meetings here in D.C. but also throughout Indian Country.

We are pleased to report that VA and the Indian Health Service have agreed to extend the current Reimbursement Agreement program terms through June 30, 2019. This extension date also applies to the Reimbursement Agreements VA has with Tribal Health Programs (THP). Further news includes the near finalization of amendments to Title 38 Part 14 regulations. Chickasaw Nation Lieutenant Governor Jefferson Keel co-authored an insightful and informative blog about the impact of the amended rule. The blog can be found here: <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/34839/va-to-recognize-tribal-organizations-as-veteran-representatives/>

We've also been busy completing the 2016 VA Tribal Consultation report, complete with VA responses, to the series of tribal consultations VA initiated with tribal governments last year. We plan to have a one page reference sheet that lists the priorities tribal leaders identified for serving Veterans. We hope tribal governments (and the VA as well as other collaborative partners) find the report and reference sheet to be useful information for policy recommendations and future program planning.

Moving on to updates from our field tribal relations specialists, I'll share an overview of what the OTGR team has been working on most recently (and I'll share upcoming events announcements from the specialists as well).

Over in Minneapolis, Peter Vicaire has been travelling to tribal meetings in an effort to spread the word and garner tribal support for the issue of illegal state taxation of reservation-domiciled service members and Veterans. Recently, the State of Arizona appropriated \$2 million to return to Native Veterans who were wrongly taxed by the state during their time in service. In January, he spoke on this issue at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) in Centralia, WA; at a Rocky Mountain Tribal Leadership Council (RMTLC) meeting in Helena, MT; as well as in February at the Veterans Committee of the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) in Washington D.C. He also met with VA staff from Providence, RI and tribal leadership on the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) reservation in Massachusetts and has begun some preliminary planning for a Veterans event there later this year.

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Next week, he'll be at a tribal veteran service officer meeting at the Oneida Tribe in Wisconsin, where Kevin Gover, Director of the National Museum of the American Indian will also provide an update on the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

Meanwhile, our Oklahoma-based specialist, Mary Culley, scheduled or responded to invitations to meet with several tribes. In January, she traveled with VISN 16 staff to meet with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw to discuss a potential Veterans Rehabilitation collaborative project between the Tribal Health and Wellness facility and VA. She attended the Iowa Tribe Veterans Organization meeting and supported a meeting between the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) and the Kiowa Tribe to discuss offering space to ODVA service officers to assist Veterans from the seven southern plains tribes located in western Oklahoma. Mary also worked with Peter Vicaire to coordinate the VA updates for the Annual USET (Veterans Committee) held here in DC in early February.

Mary has several tentative presentations and meetings schedule for the latter part of April, but she is confirmed to support the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board Public Health Conference scheduled for April 11-13. The focus of the VA presentation will be the VBA claims process, traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress. For more information about the presentation and conference, please contact [Mary.Culley@va.gov](mailto:Mary.Culley@va.gov).

Looking further to the west, both Homana Pawiki (based in Arizona) and Terry Bentley (based in Oregon) had meetings, trainings and/or engagements related to implementation of the Tribal HUD-VASH (Veterans Assisted Supported Housing) projects currently underway in designated tribal communities. In January, Homana attended Tribal HUD VASH program training in Denver where over 70 participants from various tribes gained knowledge and shared information about launching HUD VASH services for homeless Veterans or Veterans at risk of homelessness on tribal lands. VA case managers, HUD Office of Native American Program leaders and staff provided excellent support for the sessions. Homana recently met with Pueblo of Zuni (tribal headquarters based in New Mexico) Tribal Council members and the Pueblo of Zuni Housing Authority leadership to discuss the program and how to make it effective and successful for Veterans from Zuni Pueblo. Meanwhile, back in Arizona, we are excited to report that the Navajo Nation Housing Authority is completing the tribe's first voucher for the program and will house their first Veteran by the time this newsletter is released. While we're still on the subject of Tribal HUD VASH (I still have a few more updates from the Southwest), over in Oregon, Terry Bentley traveled with the VISN 20 Director Michael Murphy to meet with tribal officials from the Warm Springs Tribe to also review and discuss how to make the program as effective as possible in reaching and serving Veterans from Warm Springs. The meeting was productive and we look forward to seeing the program continue to advance in the days ahead.

Homana has also been busy lining up VA subject matter experts to present to the CMS sponsored upcoming Indian Health Service, Tribal Health Program, Urban Indian Program training sessions to be held during March in Phoenix, Gallup and Denver. She also supported VA Acting Under Secretary for Benefits, Tom Murphy, during his intergovernmental site visit to New Mexico, which included a tribal Veterans Town Hall meeting held at the Santa Fe Indian School. Under Secretary Murphy sincerely enjoyed meeting with the tribal Veterans and expressed strong interest in visiting other tribal communities in the near future.

Looking way out west, our tribal government relations specialist Terry Bentley (accompanied by Peter Vicaire who presented on the unlawful taxation of reservation-domiciled service members) participated in the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) winter meeting where she offered VA updates to the Veterans Committee. Recently, Terry traveled to California, where she had a site visit to the Sacramento Urban Indian Health Center and made plans to follow up with Veterans Health Administration colleagues to facilitate communications and answers to

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questions that the Urban Indian Program has about serving Veterans and the Choice program. The week of March 13, I'll be joining Terry in sponsoring a VA outreach booth and presentations during the National Center for American Enterprise Development Conference in Nevada. Terry has also been busy meeting with officials from the Grand Ronde Tribe (Oregon) in planning efforts for the annual Gathering of Warriors event coming up in July, and planning sessions for the annual Camp Chaparral Veterans camp to be held at Yakama Nation this coming August.

Here in D.C., Clay Ward participated in the Capitol Hill VA Outreach Showcase on March 2, 2017. The event was held at the Capitol Hill Visitors Center and showcased the many programs and services VA provides for Veterans. The target audience was Veterans, Capitol Hill staffers, Constituent Services Representatives, Legislative Assistants, Military and Veterans Affairs Liaisons, and other staffers. VA Administrations that participated were VHA – MyHealthVet, Community Care, Voluntary Service, Suicide Prevention Womens' Health; VBA – Benefits Assistance Service, Compensation Service, Education Service, Loan Guaranty Service, Pension & Fiduciary, and Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment; and NCA. Other VA Offices that participated were the Veterans Experience Office, Office of Survivors Assistance, Board of Veterans Appeals, Office of General Council, Office of Information and Technology, Explore VA/Digital Media Engagement, Center for Women's Veterans, Center for Minority Health, and Faith Based Outreach.

I am sincere when I say the past couple of months have been some of the busiest days for travel and site visits (usually our schedule starts to take off in late spring) since the inception of OTGR in 2011. It's exciting to see the collaborative partnerships tribes are reaching out to form with the VA and exciting to see how tribes are establishing their own Tribal Departments of Veterans Affairs and working diligently to honor, reach and serve all Veterans.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter as much as our team enjoyed preparing it, with the help of our editor, Peter Vicaire. Please let us know if you have suggestions or submissions to the newsletter by emailing us at: [tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov](mailto:tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov). We look forward to hearing from you and I look forward to catching up with tribal leaders, Veterans and all of our readers during my travels throughout the year. Please know that if you're in the D.C. area, our door is open.

Happy Reading,



**Stephanie Birdwell**

Links to non-Federal services are provided solely as a service to our readers. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and none should be inferred. VA is not responsible for the content of the individual organization web pages found at these links nor the information provided on these events by organizations or individuals.

## VA, IHS, and Tribal Health Programs Extend Reimbursement Agreement to 2019



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Indian Health Service  
Rockville MD 20857

JAN 17 2017

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am pleased to share an exciting update on our work with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to improve the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native veterans. Last week, on behalf of the Indian Health Service (IHS), I signed an amendment with VA to extend the period of a national reimbursement agreement for direct health care services through June 30, 2019. Extending the reimbursement agreement has been a major priority for Tribes and the IHS this past year.

This significant accomplishment will continue the positive impacts on the health care services for our Native veterans in future years. Our combined effort did not occur overnight and I want to thank Tribal Leaders and Federal staff at IHS and the VA for the hard work and extensive collaboration that resulted in this agreement. We met on several occasions across the country, including Tribal Advisory Committee meetings, national conferences, Tribal Consultation sessions, listening sessions and individual Tribal Delegation Meetings. Your input and involvement paved the path for this to happen. As a result, we exceeded our expectations by entering into an amendment that extends the agreement to June 30, 2019, which is six months beyond our initial goal of December 2018.

For those who may be less familiar with the national reimbursement agreement, I would like to point out that on October 1, 2010, the IHS and VA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the goal to improve the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native veterans. On December 5, 2012, the agencies signed a reimbursement agreement allowing VA to financially compensate IHS for direct health care provided to American Indian and Alaska Native veterans that are eligible for and enrolled in VA's health care system. Many Tribal Health Programs followed suit, signing similar reimbursement agreements. The Agency agreement was set to sunset in December 2017. To continue the partnership required an extension to the agreement. That brings us to today's announcement of this amendment.

To emphasize the value of our coordinated effort and partnership, I point to the fact that by the end of fiscal year 2015, the VA had reimbursed over \$16.1 million for direct care services provided by IHS and Tribal Health Programs covering 5,000 eligible Veterans. I encourage you to read more about the results of this partnership in the IHS-VA MOU Annual Report that is available on the VA website at: [http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/docs/2015\\_VA-IHS\\_Report.pdf](http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/docs/2015_VA-IHS_Report.pdf). The goals of the MOU are to provide eligible American Indian and Alaska Native veterans with access to care closer to their homes; promote cultural competence and quality health care; and focus on increasing care coordination, collaboration, and resource-sharing for eligible native veterans.



Page 2 – Tribal Leader

Thank you for your partnership with IHS and VA to improve health care for American Indian and Alaska Native veterans across the country. A copy of the amendment is enclosed.

Sincerely,

/Mary Smith/

Mary L. Smith  
Principal Deputy Director



Enclosure

Concerning, the reimbursement agreement, here's a [blog article](#) written by Dr. Baligh Yehia, VA's Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Community Care.



“VA is working to improve the [health](#) of our nation’s [American Indian and Alaska \(AI/AN\) Veterans](#) by expanding access to care and care coordination efforts with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Tribal Health Programs (THPs) nationwide. In 2012, VA signed a national reimbursement agreement with Indian Health Service allowing VA to compensate IHS for direct health care provided to eligible AI/AN Veterans.

[Recently extended through June 30, 2019](#), the agreement will continue to improve



the Veteran experience with community care by providing timely access to care closer to home and strengthening VA's high-performing network within a culturally sensitive community. The agreement is also used as a baseline to establish multiple reimbursement agreements (almost 100 to date) between VA and federally-recognized tribes to further expand access across the country for AI/AN Veterans and throughout Alaska for non-native Veterans.

In addition to providing thousands of eligible Veterans with direct care services, the agreement encourages resource sharing between the VA, Indian Health Service and THPs, and promotes quality health care through collaborative relationships and agreements.

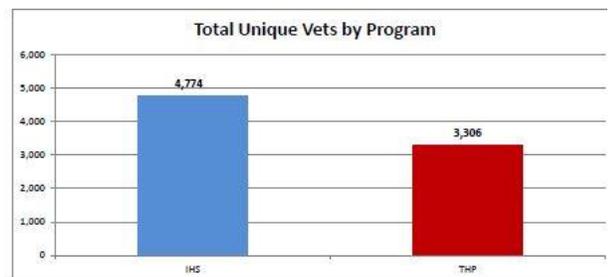
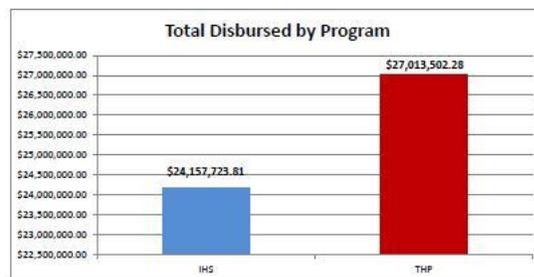
If you're interested in learning more about this important partnership, information about the program can be found on the [Office of Tribal Government Relations website](#) or by contacting the Tribal Agreements Program Team at [tribal.agreements@va.gov](mailto:tribal.agreements@va.gov)."

## VA Reimburses over \$51 Million to IHS and Tribal Health Programs



Tribal health clinics interested in entering into a reimbursement agreement with VA for serving veterans should send an initial note of interest to: [tribal.agreements@va.gov](mailto:tribal.agreements@va.gov)

National Data				
Total Disbursement for entire IHS/THP Program - Agmt Date to FYTD	Total Disbursement by Program - Agmt Date to FYTD			Total Unique Veterans for entire IHS/THP Agmt Date to FYTD
<b>\$51,175,533.09</b>	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Vets	<b>7,941</b>
	IHS	\$24,157,723.81	4,774	
	THP	\$27,013,502.28	3,306	
Total Disbursement - Out of System Retirements (only)	Total Disbursement of Out of System Retirements (only) - <i>payments</i> <i>are included in above totals</i>			Total Unique Veterans - Out of System Retiro (only)
<b>\$19,795.23</b>	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Vets	<b>721</b>
	IHS	\$15,488.23	638	
	THP	\$0.00	0	





## Recognition of Tribal Organizations for Representation of VA Claimants

This rule change is scheduled to take effect on March 21, 2017. Any questions should be directed to Peter Vicaire at [Peter.Vicaire@va.gov](mailto:Peter.Vicaire@va.gov). Below is the summary of the Final Rule – which can be read in its entirety (8 pages) [HERE](#) or: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-01-19/pdf/2017-00947.pdf>

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending its regulations concerning recognition of certain national, State, and regional or local organizations for purposes of VA claims representation. Specifically, this rulemaking allows the Secretary to recognize tribal organizations in a similar manner as the Secretary recognizes State organizations. The final rule allows a tribal organization that is established and funded by one or more tribal governments to be recognized for the purpose of providing assistance on VA benefit claims. In addition, the final rule allows an employee of a tribal government to become accredited through a recognized State organization in a similar manner as a County Veterans' Service Officer (CVSO) may become accredited through a recognized State organization. The effect of this action is to address the needs of Native American populations who are geographically isolated from existing recognized Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) or who may not be utilizing other recognized VSOs due to cultural barriers or lack of familiarity with those organizations.

## Serving Our People - VA Recognizes Tribal Organizations as Veteran Representatives

Here's a blog article written by Jefferson Keel, Lt. Governor, Chickasaw Nation and former president of National Congress of American Indians, as well as Peter Vicaire from VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations. The blog can be read online [here](#):

Native Americans serve in the military among the highest rate, per capita, compared to other groups and our nations honor the place of tribal warriors in our communities and our culture on a daily basis. But for veterans living within or near tribal communities, it can sometimes be difficult to receive representation for benefit claims. Often, these veterans cannot reach existing Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) or may not be using them due to cultural barriers.

One way VA has tried to help with this is through a rule change in the Code of Federal Regulations (38 CFR 14.628). This change will allow eligible tribal organizations to become accredited by VA. It is believed that accredited tribal organizations can provide veterans with better, more culturally competent services.

Over the past year, VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) and Office of General

Counsel (OGC) have worked together to implement this rule change. In March of 2016, letters were sent to tribal leaders, asking for their input. A notice was then placed in the Federal Register (Vol. 81, No. 47: Proposed Rules page 12626) which also asked for comments and provided notice of tribal consultation. The comment period closed in April of 2016. In July of 2016, a subsequent notice in the Federal Register (Vol. 81, No. 47: Proposed Rules Pages 47091-47093) provided the opportunity to comment on the revised proposed rule. This comment period closed in September of 2016.

There were more comments received from tribal leaders and veteran advocates than was expected, showing a high level of interest in this rule change. “This rule is a positive step forward for Indian Country and the Veterans Administration,” said Reyn Leno, Vietnam veteran and Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. “For decades, Tribes with accredited facilities have been able to provide quality services to our Native American Veterans and Veterans alike. The piece that was missing was the ability to provide assistance on VA benefit claims.

This rule recognizes the unique relationship our Tribes have with our Federal Government and Veterans in some of our most rural communities. No Veteran should have to drive hundreds of miles to receive care they could be eligible to receive next door at a Tribal facility. The ability to credential Tribal Employees as VSOs will also help to further extend services to Native Veterans in a culturally appropriate manner. I applaud the rule and thank the Veterans Administration for their due diligence on this matter.”

Tribal Nations serve veterans first. We open our ceremonies and carry the flags of our nations. Today there are around 1600 living Chickasaw veterans. Most of these men and women are veterans of Viet Nam, the Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan. Most of our WWII veterans have now passed on and our Korean War veteran numbers are rapidly dwindling. But receiving VA accreditation is not an easy process. VA must ensure, as legally required, that all accredited VSOs can provide long-term, quality representation. As such, tribal organizations must meet the same stringent requirements as national and state VSOs. OTGR can assist with tribal applications before they are sent to OGC, which makes the final approval. VA invites all interested tribal organizations to consider beginning the process of becoming a VSO. For more information, visit VA’s website: <http://www.va.gov/ogc/accreditation.asp>.

On a daily basis active duty members become veterans and too many veterans return home to find that their greatest challenges still lie ahead. War is ugly and it has long lasting effects that challenges the resilience of all people. The tribal nations are committed to finding the path for our veterans to become tribal leaders, teachers, business owners, active citizens and successful parents. We work closely with the OTGR and have established a good relationship with this important VA office. I invite other tribes to connect with OTGR as well, as they begin the road to becoming accredited VSOs. The ability to work with local, trusted qualified representatives to file for benefits our Veterans have earned through their service can make a world of difference in the Veteran and their family’s overall quality of life. I look forward to seeing tribal nations begin to support their warriors through this effort to serve those who have selflessly and courageously served our nation.



## Arizona Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund

Arizona Department of Revenue  
& Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

azdor.gov

azdvs.gov

### Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund

Pub 706

Revised: December 2016

This publication issued jointly by the Arizona Department of Revenue and the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services is intended to provide general information about the Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund. For complete details, refer to Arizona Laws 2016, Chapter 125, § 19-29. In the case of inconsistency or omission in this publication, the language of the Arizona law will prevail.

#### Background

On November 22, 2000 the United States Justice Department issued a memo declaring that the taxation and withholding of state income taxes from active duty military pay of Native Americans domiciled on their reservation was impermissible. Arizona withheld state income taxes from all active duty military pay from September 1, 1993 through December 31, 2005. Beginning January 1, 2006 Arizona no longer taxed active duty military pay and therefore discontinued state income tax withholding of this type of income. The Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund was established on July 1, 2016 to refund Arizona income tax erroneously withheld from Native Americans who served in the military while claiming tribal land as their domicile.

#### Q1. Why was the Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund established?

A1. The state income tax withheld from Native American active duty military pay occurred in years 1993 through 2005. Those tax years are currently closed by the statutes of limitations. Therefore, in an effort to refund Arizona income tax withholding from active duty military pay of Native Americans veterans domiciled on their reservation, the Arizona legislature established the Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund.

#### Q2. What years did Arizona withhold income taxes from active duty military pay?

A2. Arizona entered into an agreement with the United States Department of Defense to withhold Arizona income tax from active duty military pay beginning September 1, 1993. Arizona continued to withhold income tax on active duty military pay through 2005. Beginning January 1, 2006 Arizona no longer subjected active duty military pay to its income tax and accordingly stopped withholding state income tax.

#### Q3. How much money is allocated to the Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement fund?

A3. The Arizona Legislature allocated two million dollars to fund. Of the two million dollars 5 percent is

allocated to the Department of Veterans' Services and 5 percent is allocated to Department of Revenue to cover administrative costs.

#### Q4. What years are refunds available?

A4. Refunds may be claimed for years 1993 through 2005. Arizona did not withhold state income taxes from active duty military pay prior to 1993 or after 2005.

#### Q5. May I amend my old Arizona state income tax returns to recover my Arizona income tax withholding for years 1993 through 2005?

A5. No, 1993 through 2005 are closed tax years under Arizona's statute of limitations. The only way to recover withholding from tax years 1993 through 2005 is by making a claim under the Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund.

#### Q6. How long is the Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund open?

A6. The Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund was established July 1, 2016. The Department of Veterans' Service may not accept claims after December 31, 2017. The Department of Revenue will not grant refunds after June 30, 2019. Any money left in the Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund on July 1, 2019 will be swept into the general fund.

#### Q7. What does the claimant have to demonstrate?

A7. A. Produce evidence of military service (DD-214) or other proof of military service provided by the United States Department of Defense, B. Sign a statement declaring they were an enrolled member of their tribe while serving in the military, C. Produce evidence of domicile while serving in the military, D. Show Arizona income tax was withheld (W-2) and E. Sign a statement that the Arizona income tax was not refunded.

#### Q8. What must a claimant do in addition to the general requirements if the veteran is deceased?

A8. In addition to the requirements listed in Question and Answer #7 above, a claimant who is a surviving spouse or personal representative must produce the veteran's death certificate to make a claim. A personal representative must also sign a statement confirming they are the decedent's personal representative and produce a copy of the claimant's appointment. If the claimant is a not a surviving spouse or personal



representative they must sign a statement that the estate is worth less than \$30,000, that 30 days have passed since the decedent's death and that they are the rightful successor.

**Q9. How does the application process work?**

A9. The claimant sends their completed forms along with any relevant paper work to the Department of Veterans' Services. Veterans' Services has 210 days to accept or reject the claim. Claims accepted by the Department of Veterans' Services are then sent to the Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue has 210 days to approve or reject claims. The Department of Revenue will issue refunds to claimants with valid claims.

**Q10. What forms are used to make a claim?**

A10. Arizona Form NASF is used for general claims, Arizona Form NASF-D is an additional form for claimants if the veteran is deceased and Arizona Form NASF-RS is a form used to substantiate the veteran's residency.

**Q11. Where do I find the application forms?**

A11. The application forms are available to download online at <https://dvs.az.gov> or <https://www.azdor.gov>

**Q12. Where do I mail my completed forms?**

A12. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services  
Attention: NASF  
3839 N. 3rd Street, Suite 209  
Phoenix, AZ 85012

**Q13. Who may make a claim?**

A13. Native American veterans who had Arizona income tax withheld from their active duty military pay while domiciled on their reservation. If the veteran is deceased the surviving spouse or personal representative may make a claim. If anyone other than the surviving spouse or personal representative (e.g., child of the veteran) makes a claim they must show the value of decedent's estate was less than \$30,000.

**Q14. How are claims paid?**

A14. On a first-come, first-served basis until the fund is exhausted.

**Q15. Is interest paid on the refunds?**

A15. Yes, settlement payments shall include interest computed on a daily basis from the date of a timely filed return.

**Q16. Are refunds subject to setoffs?**

A16. Yes, the refunds are subject to setoffs consistent with A.R.S. § 42-1122. Examples of setoffs would include back taxes, overdue child support and unpaid court fees.

**Q17. What if I do not have my DD-214 or other proof of military service?**

A17. Arizona Form NASF includes a check box allowing the claimant to authorize the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services to obtain their DD-214 or other proof of military service on their behalf from the United States Department of Defense. Please attach and sign Form SF-180 and attach it to your application.

**Q18. What if I do not have my old W-2's?**

A18. Arizona Form NASF includes a check box allowing the claimant to authorize the Arizona Department of Revenue to obtain prior year W-2's on their behalf from the United States Department of Defense.

**Q19. What if I had Arizona withholding from my active duty military pay while I was domiciled on my reservation, but did not file an Arizona income tax return for those years?**

A19. Even if you did not file an Arizona return during those years you are still eligible for a refund of your active duty military pay withholding including accrued interest, however any refunds paid are subject to setoffs consistent with A.R.S. § 42-1122.

**Q20. What if my claim is denied?**

A20. If the claim is denied by the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services the appealed case will go to the Office of Administrative Hearings. If the claim is denied by the Department of Revenue the appealed case will be considered a contested case heard by the Department of Revenue's Hearing Officer.

**Q21. What is the status of my refund claim?**

A21. If the application for refund is still being processed at Arizona Department of Veterans' Services the contact information is

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services  
Attention: NASF  
3839 N 3rd Street, Suite 209  
Phoenix, AZ 85012  
Phone Number: 602-255-3373  
Email Address: [NASF@AZDVS.GOV](mailto:NASF@AZDVS.GOV)

If the application for refund is being processed by the Arizona Department of Revenue the contact information is

Arizona Department of Revenue  
Attention: NASF  
1600 W Monroe, Division Code 9  
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2650  
Phone Number: 602-716-6027  
Email Address: [NASF@azdor.gov](mailto:NASF@azdor.gov)

This publication is available in an alternative format upon request.



Any questions regarding the issue of illegal state taxation of Native American veterans outside of Arizona should be directed to [Peter.Vicaire@va.gov](mailto:Peter.Vicaire@va.gov).

For the Hopi Tribe, Eugene Talas ([ETalas@hopi.nsn.us](mailto:ETalas@hopi.nsn.us)) has been delegated by the Vice Chairman of the tribe to be the official designee for the Arizona Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund.

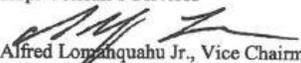


Herman G. Honanie  
*Chairman*

Alfred Lomahquahu, Jr.  
*Vice-Chairman*

## MEMORANDUM

To: Eugene Talas, Manager  
Hopi Veteran's Services

From:   
Alfred Lomahquahu Jr., Vice Chairman  
Office of the Vice Chairman

Date: January 13, 2017

Subject: Delegation of Authority

Pursuant to the Delegation of Constitutional Authority extended by the Chairman of the Hopi Tribe to the Office of the Vice Chairman, dated March 25, 2014, Section "C", "To be the primary point of contact for all veteran issues and events.", and to be "... responsible for providing technical assistance for the federal and Hopi Office(s) of Veteran Services... to include providing support for any Hopi veteran issue regarding tribal, state, and federal initiatives..."

By this notice, I am delegating to Eugene Talas, Manager of Hopi Veteran's Services, to be the official designated by the Hopi Tribe, to sign on behalf of the Hopi Tribe and Veterans on all NASF applications submitted.

In the event of any absence of Mr. Talas, any issues regarding this matter will be addressed by the Office of the Vice Chairman.

If you have any questions in regards to this memorandum, please feel free to contact me via email [ALomahquahu@hopi.nsn.us](mailto:ALomahquahu@hopi.nsn.us) or my Chief of Staff [DSecakuku@hopi.nsn.us](mailto:DSecakuku@hopi.nsn.us) or by phone at 734-3112.

cc: Office of the Chairman  
Hopi Tribal Council  
Office of General Counsel  
Hopi Veteran's Services  
Hopi Veteran's Affairs  
OVC File

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN

----- P.O. BOX 123 --- KYKOTSMOVI, AZ --- 86039 --- (928) 734-3112 -----



## Last Living Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talker Honored

Here's an article by Alex Hamer that ran in [Indian Country Media Network](#) on January 17, 2017

"The Rochester Knighthawks professional lacrosse team honored the last surviving Akwesasne World War II code talker, Louis Levi Oakes, 92, Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) in front of a crowd of 6,000 Saturday night at the Blue Cross Arena in Rochester, NY.

Oakes served as a code talker in the South Pacific during WWII and was awarded the Silver Star for his service. The silver star is the third-highest military award for valor given for showing gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States. After the war, Oakes worked for 30 years as an ironworker in Buffalo, NY and later worked in the highway department at the Mohawk territory in Akwesasne, New York before retiring.



Levi Oakes was presented with a traditional lacrosse stick in honor of his Iroquoian Mohawk heritage

During WWII, the Mohawk language was one of several Native languages used to send communications between U.S. forces. The Native American code talkers are world known to have to only unbroken military code in history and these messages in WWII were never interpreted by the Japanese.

At the Knighthawks game, Oakes' daughter Dora Oakes told Indian Country Today that her father never talked about his service and it was only a few years ago, when their local American Legion started to ask about his service, that she found out the contribution her father and other Mohawks made as code talkers.

With the help of his great grandchildren, Oakes made his way to the center of the arena where the crowd gave a thunderous cheer and applause. Oakes was gifted a traditional wooden lacrosse stick before he dropped the ball in a ceremonial faceoff to start the game.

Oakes told Indian Country Today what he thought about being recognized for his service. "It's a great honor is what it is, I really appreciate what these people are doing for me". In 2016 Oakes and his friend and fellow veteran Clayton Logan were also honored at the [Marvin Joe Curry Veterans Pow Wow](#) held in Salamanca, NY."



## Geriatric Veterans Training With IHS and Tribal Health Programs

Here's an article from the Office of Rural Health's "The Rural Connection."

The Rural Connection • Winter 2016

### VA Reaches Indian Health Service and Tribal Health Programs with Rural Interdisciplinary Team Training Program

By B. Josea Kramer, PhD, Director, VA Geriatric Scholars Program and Associate Director for Education and Evaluation, Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Centers (GRECC); and Judith L. Howe, PhD, Deputy Director and Associate Director for Education and Evaluation, Veterans Integrated Service Network 3 GRECC at James J. Peters VA Medical Center



The VA Rural Interdisciplinary Team Training (RITT) Program is geared to strengthen team-based care for aging Veterans at rural outpatient clinics. Recently, RITT expanded its training outside of VA to include the Indian Health Service and Tribal Health Programs. Photo credit: Judith L. Howe, PhD, RITT Program Director

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs continues to build expertise in geriatrics and gerontology through its network of Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Centers (GRECC). Now, VA expanded its related training to include the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Tribal Health Programs through the Geriatric Scholars Program and its Rural Interdisciplinary Team Training (RITT) program.

The Geriatric Scholars Program is a collaboration of 10 GRECCs to integrate geriatrics into primary care practices. The RITT component includes the entire primary care and administrative support team to promote collaborative, team-based care to address the complex needs of older patients and their families.

Recently, the S'Klallam Tribal Health Program invited the RITT team to its facility in Port Gamble, Washington. One provider noted that the training highlighted "the importance of humility when interacting with the elderly." Another staff member commented that the training was an "excellent use of teaching methods and aids [with] excellent role playing to drive the point home." The RITT training, in addition to bringing geriatrics knowledge and skills to the clinic staff, also "brought [clinic] departments together."

The IHS elder health consultant commented, "The VA RITT training offers IHS and tribal programs a highly efficient, effective way to improve the quality of care they provide to the elders they serve. The training focuses on building specific capabilities to meet needs identified by the facility and community and it does that by training the whole care team. This approach is perfectly designed for our smaller, rural facilities."

Dr. Josea Kramer, Geriatric Scholars Program Director, noted that the opportunity to share educational experiences is an important outcome of the Memorandum of Understanding between VA and IHS that emphasizes active sharing of resources.

This year, the Geriatric Scholars Program plans to offer up to 10 programs to IHS and Tribal Health Program clinics, as well as 20 VA rural Community Based Outpatient Clinics. For more information about the RITT program for IHS and Tribal Health Programs, please contact Annette Atanous, Program Coordinator, at [Annette.Atanous@va.gov](mailto:Annette.Atanous@va.gov).

The VA Employee Education System accredited the RITT for Continuing Medication Education and Continuing Education Units for non-physicians; and the VA Office of Rural Health provided funding for RITT faculty travel and educational materials. ♦



## Wounded Warriors Family Support Donates New Vehicle to Eastern Shoshone Veterans

The vehicle was received by members of the Richard Pogue American Legion Post 81. Wounded Warriors Family Support has now graciously donated 22 new vehicles to tribes for their veterans – seven in 2015 and fifteen in 2016.



In the photo from left to right: Delmer Huakaas (US Army); John Wadda (US Army); Wyman Weed (US Navy); Thomas Jones (US Army); Lyle Wadda (US Army); and Baptiste Weed (US Marines). 5 are Vietnam veterans and 1 Gulf War.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - January 13, 2017



**VA's Rule Establishes a Presumption of Service Connection for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune**  
*VA to provide disability benefits for related diseases*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

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

“We have a responsibility to take care of those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “Establishing a presumption for service at Camp Lejeune will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned.”

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

Veterans with 30 or more cumulative days of active duty service, at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period are already eligible for certain medical benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

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

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas. The rule will be effective either 60 days after publication in the Federal Register, or following conclusion of the 60-day Congressional Review, whichever is later.



## VA Awards 3 University Contracts Promoting Community Engagement with National Cemeteries

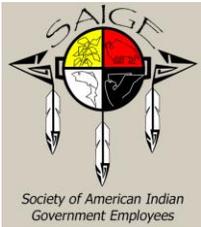
Black Hills State University (South Dakota) will develop materials for Sicangu Akicita Owicahe (Rosebud) Tribal Veterans Cemetery and Lakota Freedom Tribal Veterans Cemetery (Pine Ridge)

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded three university contracts to research and share local history through the diversity of Veterans' experience found in VA national cemeteries, officials announced Feb. 16. "The award of these three contracts signifies the VA National Cemetery Administration's (NCA) dedication and commitment to providing enhanced memorialization and lasting tributes that commemorate the service and sacrifice of Veterans," said Interim Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Ronald E. Walters.

NCA awarded three separate contracts to San Francisco State University, Black Hills State University and University of Central Florida to conduct cemetery research and produce educational material for K-12 schools and the general public in an effort to promote community engagement with Veterans' history.

VA awarded a total of \$672,573 to San Francisco State University to develop material related to San Francisco and Golden Gate national cemeteries; Black Hills State University for Black Hills National Cemetery, Sicangu Akicita Owicahe Tribal Veterans Cemetery and Lakota Freedom Tribal Veterans Cemetery; and University of Central Florida for Florida National Cemetery.

The initial contracts are the first of many planned initiatives to engage educators, students, researchers and the general public through NCA's Veterans Legacy Program. For more information, visit: [www.cem.va.gov/legacy](http://www.cem.va.gov/legacy).



## Veteran Program at Upcoming SAIGE Event

Society of American Indian  
Government Employees  
17706 N. Peoria, Skiatook, OK 74070



Honoring Our Ancestors  
Through Government Service  
[www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Washington, DC

January 31, 2017

Contacts: SAIGE Chair, Fredericka Joseph, 410-802-2190 or [chair@saige.org](mailto:chair@saige.org)

SAIGE Vice-Chair, Lori Windle, 303-293-5082 or [vice-chair@saige.org](mailto:vice-chair@saige.org)

*SAIGE 14<sup>th</sup> Annual National Training Program, Scottsdale, Arizona*

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) will hold its 14<sup>th</sup> annual National Training Program, "*Standing Together*," in Scottsdale, AZ, June 5 – 8, 2017. It will take place at the beautiful We Ko Pa Resort and Conference Center, owned and operated by the Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation.

The training provides forums on the most current issues, opportunities, and challenges facing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) government employees, the AI/AN tribes and the people we serve. The plenary sessions offer acclaimed and dynamic presenters and the developmental workshops are presented by knowledgeable speakers. Workshops are designed in these areas: Federal Indian Law, Leadership and Professional Development, Natural Resources & Culture, and Indian Country. Networking opportunities with tribal and governmental leadership abound over the course of the Training Program.

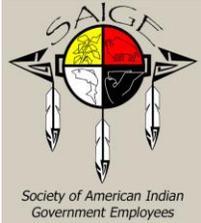
SAIGE hosts an all-expense paid Youth Program designed to develop AI/AN college students into the next generation of leaders and introduce them to prosperous and fulfilling career paths in Government. Recruiters from private and public sectors will have the opportunity to participate as exhibitors, meet the students, and promote career opportunities within their agencies and organizations. Youth Program scholarships are limited, so students are encouraged to apply soon. Applications may be found on the SAIGE website at [www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org) under Special Programs/Youth Track News.

SAIGE proudly supports its Veterans Program developed for and by veterans that offers training specific to the needs of AI/AN veterans by highlighting available federal benefits and providing attending veterans exposure to varied employment options. The Veterans' Program facilitates collaboration and partnership opportunities among veterans, agencies that serve them and veterans' organizations. The Veterans' Program is open to all SAIGE registrants and is free to local area veterans.

The SAIGE National Training Program early registration fee is \$625 online by April 30; \$700 to pre-register online by May 24; \$750 for late on-site registration. Discounts may be available for tribal governments, groups, SAIGE Lifetime members and government retirees. Exhibit booth fees have been reduced in 2017 to \$1000 for standard Exhibitors. For more information on exhibits please contact Phil Hamel at [secretary@saige.org](mailto:secretary@saige.org).

Invest in yourself and your organization! To learn more about all these opportunities and to register online visit us at [www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org). Online registration will be available in March. Check the website for updates.

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native Federal, Tribal, State and local government employees. SAIGE was formed to promote their recruitment, retention, equal treatment and advancement within the government and to assist government agencies in honoring the unique Federal-Tribal relationship.



**SOCIETY OF AMERICAN INDIAN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (SAIGE)**  
**MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD**

**Purpose:** The SAIGE Meritorious Service Award honors military members, Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees and military veterans in government service, who have supported the DoD or their agency's mission, whose attributes best epitomized the qualities and core values of their respective military service or DoD Component.

**Date of Event:** 8 June 2017

**Location:** WeKoPa Hotel and Convention Center, Scottsdale, Arizona

**Eligibility:** Civilian Employees, Military Members and Veterans

**Performance Period:** January 2016- March 2017

**Due Date:** 3 April 2017

**SAIGE Point of Contact:** Mr. Danny Garceau, SAIGE Warrior Society Director,  
danny.garceau@saige.org

**Specific Evaluation Criteria and Nomination Packet Requirements:**

- a. The nominees demonstrated support for inclusion and promotion of all DoD and government personnel to include American Indians and Alaskan Natives within the Armed Forces or government civilian workforce.
- b. The nominees promoted a positive image of American Indians and Alaskan Natives serving in government through government programs and or community outreach.
- c. Organizations may select award nominations based upon set criteria and assemble award nomination packages. Packages should include the listed items.
  - a. Cover or transmittal memorandum.
  - b. Award Nomination Transmittal Form (contained in this guide).
  - c. Brief narrative describing (Microsoft Word Document) the recommended award nominees' accomplishments warranting the recognition specific to the award not to exceed two pages.
  - d. Award citation highlighting the recommended award nominees' accomplishments, not to exceed twelve lines of narrative.
  - e. A single-spaced biography of the nominee not to exceed one page, including tribal membership or AI/AN ancestry.
  - f. A digital photograph of the nominee (.JPG format preferred).

**\*\*\*Submissions will be Microsoft Word .doc format with  
12-point font with 1 inch left and 1 inch right margins\*\*\***

- d. A maximum of 10 awardees will be selected from entire pool of nominees.

**Note:** Military and Civilian award nominations should be submitted directly to SAIGE for consideration.

## National Gathering of American Indian Veterans



Here's a 16-page [Event Report](#) for the second annual gathering, organized by the [Trickster Art Gallery](#), which took place in Wheaton, Illinois from August 19-21, 2016. Mark your calendar for the next one, which is again at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, IL from July 21-23, 2017.



## 2016 National Gathering of American Indian Veterans

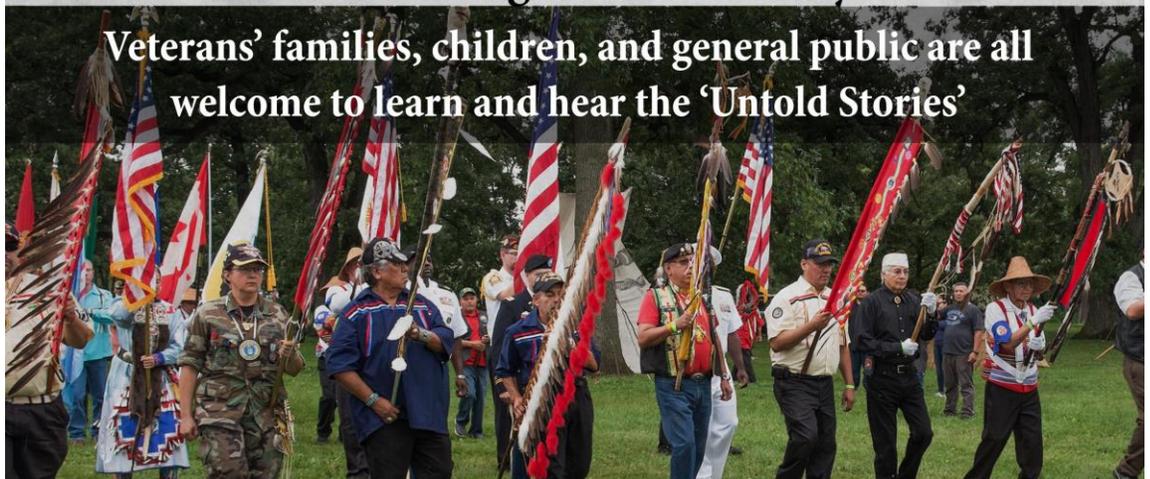


## Event Report



3rd Annual  
**National Gathering of  
American Indian Veterans:**  
Celebrating *all* U.S. Military

Veterans' families, children, and general public are all  
welcome to learn and hear the 'Untold Stories'



**Thursday**

Baseball Game at  
Boomers Stadium Suite:  
Native Veterans to  
Throw First Pitch

**Friday**

Casual Traditional Dinner  
for Veterans & Family

Guest Speakers to start  
the weekend  
Please RSVP to:

[info@trickstergallery.com](mailto:info@trickstergallery.com)

**Saturday**

8 am Veteran's Roll Call  
9am Formal Grand Entry w/  
Eagle Staffs and Colors  
10:30 am- 4 pm Town Hall Meeting  
5 Veteran Home Cooked  
Traditional Dinner  
7 - 9 Entertainment

**Sunday**

8 AM Breakfast  
9 AM Formal  
Grand Entry  
10 AM - 12 Continue  
Town Hall meeting  
and wrap up  
12 -1 PM Time to Talk and  
Safe Travels Exchange Information

Accommodations:  
Hilton Lisle/Naperville  
3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle, IL 60532, USA  
Hotel (630) 505-0900, Direct (630) 245-7644  
\$99 rates, \$89 for veterans. Scheduled transportation provided to/from event

Join us at Cantigny Park:  
1s151 Winfield Rd  
Wheaton, IL, 60189

Rough camping at Cantigny  
available for veterans only

**Save the Date!**  
**July 21st - July 23rd, 2017**

ROBERT R.  
**MCCORMICK**  
FOUNDATION



Hosted by "Trickster Art Gallery:  
Native Veterans of Illinois"

[www.trickstergallery.com](http://www.trickstergallery.com)

Phone: (847) 301-2090



## DoD Announces New Outreach Efforts to Veterans Regarding Discharges and Military Records

The Department of Defense today [December 30, 2016] announced a renewed effort to ensure veterans are aware of the opportunity to have their discharges and military records reviewed. Through enhanced public outreach, engagement with Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), Military Service Organizations (MSOs), and other outside groups, as well as direct outreach to individual veterans, the department encourages all veterans who believe they have experienced an error or injustice to request relief from their service's Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NR) or Discharge Review Board (DRB). Additionally, all veterans, VSOs, MSOs, and other interested organizations are invited to offer feedback on their experiences with the BCM/NR or DRB processes, including how the policies and processes can be improved.

In the past few years, the department has issued guidance for consideration of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as the repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and its predecessor policies. Additionally, supplemental guidance for separations involving victims of sexual assault is currently being considered. The department is reviewing and consolidating all of the related policies to reinforce the department's commitment to ensuring fair and equitable review of separations for all veterans. Whether the discharge or other correction is the result of PTSD, sexual orientation, sexual assault, or some other consideration, the department is committed to rectifying errors or injustices and treating all veterans with dignity and respect. With today's announcement, the department is reaffirming its intention to review and potentially upgrade the discharge status of all individuals that are eligible and that apply.

To request an upgrade or correction:

Veterans who desire a correction to their service record or who believe their discharge was unjust, erroneous, or warrants an upgrade, are encouraged to apply for review. For discharge upgrades, if the discharge was more than 15 years ago, the veteran should complete DD Form 293 (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/forms/eforms/dd0293.pdf>) and send it to their service's DRB (the address is on the form). For discharges over 15 years ago, the veteran should complete the DD Form 149 (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/forms/eforms/dd0149.pdf>) and send it to their service's BCM/NR (the address is on the form).

For corrections of records other than discharges, veterans should complete the DD Form 149 and submit their request to their service's BCM/NR (the address is on the form). Key information to include in requests:

There are three keys to successful applications for upgrade or correction. First, it is very important to explain why the veteran's discharge or other record was unjust or erroneous—for example, how it is connected to, or resulted from unjust policies, a physical or mental health condition related to military service, or some other explainable or justifiable circumstance. Second, it is important to provide support, where applicable, for



key facts. If a veteran has a relevant medical diagnosis, for example, it would be very helpful to include medical records that reflect that diagnosis. Third, it is helpful, but not always required, to submit copies of the veteran's applicable service records. The more information provided, the better the boards can understand the circumstances of the discharge.

BCM/NRs are also authorized to grant relief on the basis of clemency. Veterans who believe their post-service conduct and contributions to society support an upgrade or correction should describe their post-service activity and provide any appropriate letters or other documentation of support.

Personnel records for veterans who served after 1997 should be accessible online and are usually retrievable within hours of a request through the Defense Personnel Records Information Retrieval System (DPRIS). To obtain one's personnel records from DPRIS, go to <https://www.dpris.dod.mil/>, then select "Individual Veteran Access" on the left side of the website and follow the instructions. Veterans will need to register for a logon and verify their current mailing address before requesting records. The whole process usually takes less than 10 minutes. Those who served prior to 1997 or for whom electronic records are not available from DPRIS, can request their records from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) using the eVetRecs website at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>.



## **OTGR Central Region**

(IA; MI; MN; MT; ND; NE; SD; WI; WY)

### **Wanáħma Wóglakapi Wičhóħ’añ Wakħán (Talking to Hide Things-Code Talkers Ceremony)**

Friday, 1300 hours (CST), March 17, 2017  
Wakpala Public School, Wakpala, South Dakota

#### **AGENDA**

- 1200 hours Doors Open at Wakpala Public School  
Master of Ceremonies – Tony Bobtail Bear, US Navy Veteran
- 1300 hours Post Staffs and Colors  
Looking Back-Jamerson-Growler American Legion Post 239  
Flag Song –Veterans Song  
Lakeside Singers
- 1315 hours Invocation – Elliott Ward, US Army Veteran
- 1320 hours Welcome: – Dave Archambault II,  
Chairman-Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- 1330 hours Senator Thune Statement: – Jeannie Hovland  
Senator Rounds Statement - Tyler Tordsen
- 1335 hours Code Talker Memorial: - Steve Emery, US Army Veteran  
Secretary, SD Department of Tribal Relations
- 1345 hours Keynote: - Larry Zimmerman, US Army Veteran  
Secretary, SD Department of Veterans Affairs
- 1400 hours Presentation of Medals: Chairman Archambault, Secretary  
Zimmerman, Secretary Emery
- 1415 hours Retire Colors  
Looking Back-Jamerson-Growler American Legion Post 239  
Honor Song – Lakeside Singers

Please share a meal with the Families, Veterans, Community Members, and  
Guests



**Wanáħma Wóglakapi**  
*(Talking to Hide Things-Code Talkers)*  
**Wičhóħ'ąŋ Wičhóħ'ąŋ**  
*(Ceremony)*



**1300 hrs (1:00 pm)**  
**March 17, 2017**  
**Wakpala School Auditorium**  
**Wakpala, SD**

CODE TALKERS:

- James W. Alkire
- Henry A. Ankle, Sr.
- Wallace Cross Bear aka Walter Cross Bear
- Ambrose Gabe
- Charles Has Horns
- Jasper Iron Cloud
- Edward A. Laframboise
- Eli Little Bird
- Isaac Looking Back
- George Loves War
- Harry Loves the War
- Edmund Many Deeds, Sr.
- Matthew Oka
- Charles Red Bear
- Benedict Red Legs
- Jesse Taken Alive
- Eugene Walking Elk

**Standing Rock Sioux Tribe**  
**Department of Veterans Affairs**



For Information:  
Manaja Hill, Director/VSO 701/854-8527  
Kevin Jamerson, VSOII 701/854-8589  
Colette Walking Elk, OM 701/854-8564



**CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL HONORING CEREMONY**



## Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Signs MOU For VA's Native American Direct Home Loan

Here's an article by B.L. Azure of Char-Koosta News, regarding VA's Native American Direct Home Loan Program, which ran on December 22.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Native American Direct Loan (NADL) coordinator stopped by Pablo last week to put a VA face on its recently established relationship with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and its military veterans. In mid-November the Tribal Council formalized its relationship with the VA NADL program via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the VA that will provide an option for Tribal Member veterans when it comes to VA home loans.

Native American veterans are eligible for two types of service-earned home loans from the Department of Veterans Affairs: home loans for homes constructed on fee simple land on and off Indian reservations; and home loans for homes constructed on trust lands on Indian reservations.

The NADLs may be used by Indian veterans to, purchase, construct or remodel homes on federally recognized reservation trust or allotted lands. The NADL may also be used to refinance a prior VA loan to reduce the interest rates, if applicable.

With the CSKT signing of the VA MOU, all seven Tribal Nations in Montana and its enrolled tribal member veterans now have the option to build, buy or remodel homes on reservation trust lands. The VA has 97 MOUs with federally recognized Tribal Nations nationally. The VA is the principal lender and directly lends funds to eligible Native American veterans. It has loaned more than \$120 million heretofore under the auspices of the NADL.

Home ownership is a relatively new concept in Indian Country but that is changing with home ownership programs offered by the VA and on the Flathead Reservation programs and process assistance offered by the Salish Kootenai Housing Authority.

"A lot of times people are overwhelmed with the home loan process," Bill Haines, VA Denver Region Native American Direct Loan Coordinator, told the Tribal Council at its meeting last Thursday. However, the VA can assist veterans through every step of the process.

There are many benefits to the VA guaranteed NADL, including: no down payment required; no private mortgage insurance; easy loan qualification; minimal closing costs; no middle man; loan values up to \$417,000; and the current 30-year loan fixed interest rate at 3.75 percent. The purchased homes must be the primary residence of the veteran purchaser and family, and not a rental. There are no age limits.



“This is certainly a much needed program,” said Tribal Council Chair Vernon Finley. “It seems that veterans are always at the bottom of the list.”

In an interview Haines said the VA Denver Region has eight states — Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming — to cover. He said he and his staff are dedicated to their charge. He pointed out that the CSKT Salish Kootenai Housing Authority also has the expertise to assist veterans through the home purchasing process.



Bill Haines, VA Denver Region NADL coordinator, (left) discussed the NADL program with the Tribal Council. CSKT Legal Department attorney Dan Decker, Jr. (center) and veterans advocate Lloyd Jackson also chimed in on the discussion.

Katie Miller, SKHA Housing Resource Department manager, said the SKHA has informational programs and resources to help CSKT veterans navigate the VA home loan process for homes on fee and trust lands. The first step to understanding the home ownership process would be to attend SKHA’s monthly one-day, eight-hour home buyer class. It will present options and assistance available for potential home buyers.

For more information on SKHA home purchase assistance, contact Colleen Texas, Affordable Home Ownership coordinator, at: 675-4491, ext. 1530, or 675-2700, ext. 1530. To be eligible for a NADL:

- You must have a valid Certificate of Eligibility to be eligible for the VA home loan benefit and have available entitlement.
  - The loan must be to purchase, construct, or improve a home on Federally-recognized trust, allotted lands, Alaska Native corporations and Pacific Island territories.
  - You must occupy the property as your home.
  - You must be a satisfactory credit risk.
- 
- Your income and that of your spouses, if any, must be shown to be stable and sufficient to meet the mortgage payments, cover the other costs of owning a home, take care of other obligations and expenses, and have enough left over for family support.

## Start A Business, Build A Business

**FREE ONE-DAY WORKSHOP MARCH 11, 2017  
FOR VETERANS & SPOUSES**



**Continental  
Breakfast &  
Lunch  
Included**

**Are You a Veteran Interested in Starting a Business  
or Growing Your Small Business?**

- **Learn From Experts In The Fields Of Banking, Franchising, Government Contracts, Marketing, Selling, And Branding.**
- **Hear From Successful Veteran Business Owners And Franchisees**
- **Ask Your Important Questions To Start And Build Your Business**

**Register now at <http://bit.ly/VetsInBusiness> or call (651) 632-8937**







# TRIBAL HUD/VASH HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM

**ARE YOU NATIVE AMERICAN  
AND A  
FORMER MILITARY/VETERAN OR KNOW SOMEONE  
WHO IS?  
ARE THEY HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BEING  
HOMELESS?**

**CONTACT ME FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE IF  
YOU QUALIFY FOR THIS LONG TERM HOUSING  
VOUCHER PROGRAM.**

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS**  
Lisa Look, MSW, LCSW, LADAC  
Tribal HUD/VASH Case Manager for Cherokee Nation  
1011 Honor Heights Drive  
Muskogee, Oklahoma 74401  
Phone: (918) 616-8794 | Fax: (918) 577-3329  
[Lisa.Look@va.gov](mailto:Lisa.Look@va.gov)



# Upcoming Events for Service Members



Date	Event	Contact
January 25th, 2017 9:00 AM—11:00 AM Eastgate Workforce Center	Veterans come and meet with employers looking to hire vets	Brent Wheeler 918-796-1215 <a href="mailto:brent.wheeler@oesc.state.ok.us">brent.wheeler@oesc.state.ok.us</a>
January 28th, 2017 4:30 PM—6:30 PM Fellowship Lutheran - 67th & Sheridan	Chili Cook-Off Veterans eat for free Benefits Coffee Bunker	Fellowship Lutheran Church 918-492-4253
January 31st, 2017 6:00 PM Memorial High's Vet Arena 5840 S Hudson	"Salute To Our Veterans" Free admission to varsity games for veterans	
January 2017 Time based on parents' availability Coffee Bunker	Free 5-Week Group Parenting Program For Military and Veteran Families with A Child between 2 and 16	Reserve a spot: contact Danielle Zanotti 918-631-3242 <a href="mailto:danielle@coffeebunker.org">danielle@coffeebunker.org</a>
February 2nd, 2017 9:30 AM 8222 S Yale (Town Village)	Veterans Gathering	
February 17th, 2017 PHF Conference Center 655 Research Pkwy, OKC	2017 Conference on Serving Military-Connected Students in Higher Education (Registration Deadline Feb 3rd)	Beki Miller <a href="mailto:bmiller@odva.state.ok.us">bmiller@odva.state.ok.us</a> <a href="http://www.okhighered.org/veterans-conf/">http://www.okhighered.org/veterans-conf/</a>
February 18th, 2017 138th FW (DFAC) 9100 E 46th St N, Tulsa	Great Gown Affair	
February 25th, 2017 Moore First Baptist Church 301 NE 27th St, Moore	Great Gown Affair	
March 23rd, 2017 4:00 PM—8:00 PM Regional Training Institute in OKC	2017 Oklahoma Military & Veterans Education Fair	Beki Miller <a href="mailto:bmiller@odva.state.ok.us">bmiller@odva.state.ok.us</a>
April 8th, 2017 Military History Center in BA	Museum Civil War Display	
June 3rd, 2017 12:00 PM Battle Creek Golf Club	1st Annual Oklahoma Veterans Project Golf Tournament	Mike Lowry <a href="mailto:mlowry@signal88.com">mlowry@signal88.com</a>
October 5th—6th, 2017 Cox Business Center	Zarrow Symposium: Challenging Injustice and Discrimination	Karen LaPlante 918-585-1213
November 4th, 2017 Riverwalk Amphitheater, Jenks	Green Country Patriot Festival	Khari McVey 918-894-8448 Megan Lowry 918-430-4391
November 11th, 2017 Air & Space Museum	Concert to Honor Veterans Feat. Tulsa Oratorio Chorus	Tim Sharp <a href="mailto:sharp@acda.org">sharp@acda.org</a>

### Disclaimer

Links to non-Federal and Federal organizations are provided solely as a service to our users. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by the Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa or the Federal Government, and none should be inferred. The Community Service Council is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links nor the information provided on these events by organizations or individuals.



# Recurring Events for Service Members



Date	Event	Contact
Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 6:00 AM Turkey Mountain	TAP into Resilience Trail Run/Walk Group	Stacey Hester 918-891-1419 <a href="mailto:stacy@transitionandpurpose.com">stacy@transitionandpurpose.com</a>
Mondays (Not Holidays) 2:00 PM—5:00 PM Tulsa County Courthouse	Veterans Treatment Court On 6th Floor, Room 605	Matt Engelbach <a href="mailto:mengelbach@tulsavtc.com">mengelbach@tulsavtc.com</a>
Tuesdays 3:30 PM—4:30 PM Tulsa Vet Center	Guitar Lessons	918-628-2760 <a href="http://www.vetcenter.va.gov">www.vetcenter.va.gov</a>
Tuesdays 7:00 PM Rebel Yoga, Broken Arrow	Power Yoga	<a href="mailto:jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org">jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org</a> More at: <a href="#">RWB Tulsa's Facebook Page</a>
Tuesdays, Thursdays 6:00 AM Calisthenics Park 56th&Riverside	TAP into Resilience Stretches & Calisthenics Groups	Stacey Hester 918-891-1419 <a href="mailto:stacy@transitionandpurpose.com">stacy@transitionandpurpose.com</a>
Wednesdays 3:00 PM—5:00 PM Coffee Bunker	Employment Assistance	<a href="http://www.coffeebunker.org">www.coffeebunker.org</a>
Wednesdays 12:30 PM Coffee Bunker	The Community Foodbank of Eastern Oklahoma Mobile Eatery	Steve Lehto <a href="mailto:slehto@okfoodbank.org">slehto@okfoodbank.org</a>
Thursdays 9:30 AM Kirk of the Hills Church, Room B8	Lunch Served by All Veterans Association, Inc.	Jim DeLoach 918-298-2882 David Rule 918-698-5395 Jim Holman 918-640-8556
Thursdays 11:45 AM Tulsa Vet Center	The Community Foodbank of Eastern Oklahoma Mobile Eatery	Steve Lehto <a href="mailto:slehto@okfoodbank.org">slehto@okfoodbank.org</a>
Thursdays 12:00 PM Rotating Location—See Contact	Rucking March Training	<a href="mailto:Shannon.schneider@teamrwb.org">Shannon.schneider@teamrwb.org</a> More at: <a href="#">RWB Tulsa's Facebook Page</a>
Fridays 12:30 PM Coffee Bunker	The Community Foodbank of Eastern Oklahoma Mobile Eatery	Steve Lehto <a href="mailto:slehto@okfoodbank.org">slehto@okfoodbank.org</a>
Fridays 5:30 PM Valor Strength & Fitness Midtown	Functional Fitness	<a href="mailto:jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org">jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org</a> More at: <a href="#">RWB Tulsa's Facebook Page</a>
Saturdays 8:30 AM Hunter Park	Run/Walk/Roll	<a href="mailto:jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org">jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org</a> More at: <a href="#">RWB Tulsa's Facebook Page</a>
Saturdays 9:45 AM Whole Foods 91st & Yale	Coffee, Tea, and RWB	<a href="mailto:jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org">jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org</a> More at: <a href="#">RWB Tulsa's Facebook Page</a>
Saturdays 12:00 PM—1:00 PM Coffee Bunker	Fighting Addiction	<a href="http://www.coffeebunker.org">www.coffeebunker.org</a>



Date	Event	Contact
Sundays 10:00 AM Turkey Mountain	Group Hiking—Easy to Moderate	<a href="mailto:jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org">jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org</a> More at: <a href="#">RWB Tulsa's Facebook Page</a>
1st and 3rd Saturday 7:00 AM Valor Strength and Fitness	Ruck March Training	<a href="mailto:jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org">jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org</a> More at: <a href="#">RWB Tulsa's Facebook Page</a>
2nd Sunday Each Month 2:00 PM Riverside (Start @ Peoria)	Cycling Fun	<a href="mailto:jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org">jennifer.kuntz@teamrwb.org</a> More at: <a href="#">RWB Tulsa's Facebook Page</a>
2nd Tuesday Each Month 5:30 PM—7:30 PM Oklahoma Joe's 6175 E 61st St Tulsa	Veterans Gathering	Jim Holman <a href="mailto:hii@tulsacoxmail.com">hii@tulsacoxmail.com</a>
2nd Wednesday Each Month 9:00 AM — 10:30 AM Tulsa Eastgate Workforce Center	Veterans Job Club	Stephen Sullivan 918-796-1220 <a href="mailto:stephen.sullivan@oesc.state.ok.us">stephen.sullivan@oesc.state.ok.us</a>
2nd Thursday Each Month 11:30 AM—1:30 PM CSC Office, 2nd Floor	Warrior Partnerships of Eastern Oklahoma	Peter Luitwieler <a href="mailto:pluitwieler@csctulsa.org">pluitwieler@csctulsa.org</a>
3rd Thursday Each Month 9:00 AM—1:00 PM S Tulsa Community House, 5780 S Peoria	Monthly Veteran's Day Grocery Program: Veterans may get enough groceries to feed their household for 5-7 days.	<a href="http://southtulsacommunityhouse.org">southtulsacommunityhouse.org</a> 918-742-5597 <a href="mailto:communityhouse@tulsacoxmail.com">communityhouse@tulsacoxmail.com</a>
3rd Thursday Each Month 2:00 PM VFW Post #577	Mayor of Tulsa Veterans Advisory Council Meeting	Sandy Oxford 918-628-2760 <a href="mailto:sandra.oxford@va.gov">sandra.oxford@va.gov</a>
3rd Saturday Each Month 9:30 AM Golden Corral 21st & Memorial	USMC Northeast Oklahoma Chosin Few	Jim Holman
3rd Saturday Each Month 11:00 AM—12:00 PM American Legion Post 308	USS Tulsa Memorial Fleet Reserve Association Branch 280	Cher Garrett 918-504-0155 <a href="http://www.fra.org">www.fra.org</a>
4th Saturday Each Month 9:00 AM VFW Post 577	Tulsa Marine Corps League Schwab Det 857	<a href="http://www.mclschwabdets857.com/">http://www.mclschwabdets857.com/</a>
Last Tuesday Each Month 9:00 AM Tapestry at Woodland Hills	Veterans Breakfast (RSVP Requested)	Crystal Nichols 918-893-6177 <a href="http://www.tapestrytulsa.com/">http://www.tapestrytulsa.com/</a>
September 1st—December 31st Flexible Hours—Call Forge of Honor	Free Blacksmith & Welding Instruction for Veterans and First Responders	Don Johnson 918-510-7074 <a href="mailto:don@forgeofhonorfoundation.org">don@forgeofhonorfoundation.org</a>
Flu Season All Walgreens Locations	Free Flu Shots for All Veterans Enrolled in VA Healthcare	
Ongoing Eastern OK VA Healthcare System	Bike Clinic (Contact your Primary Care Provider for referral)	Marlene Diaz 918-577-3699 ext.1326 Meghan Collins 918-577-3874



**NAVUB**

National Association of Veterans Upward Bound

# SAVE THE DATES

MARCH 27-31, 2017  
**NAVUB ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
ARLINGTON, TEXAS  
HILTON ARLINGTON HOTEL

**If you haven't already registered, NOW IS THE TIME!!**

To register for the conference go to:

<http://www.navub.org/events/index.php>

**Hotel cut-off is March 2nd**

To book your hotel stay go to:

[http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/A/ARLAHF-NAV-20170326/index.jhtml?WT.mc\\_id=POG](http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/A/ARLAHF-NAV-20170326/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG)

*Just a few added value opportunities to  
enjoy while at the conference:*

*Off Site Lunch and Trip to the Cowboys Stadium*

*Information Sharing*

*Professional Development*

*Best Practices Discussions*

*COE Quality of Design Webinar*

*Community Service Project*

*Morning Exercise Opportunities*

*Lots of Networking*

*Time to Explore the City*

**REGISTER TODAY!**

*Hilton Arlington Hotel Amenities*

- \* R Bar and Grill
- \* FIRST, Bountiful Breakfast Buffet
- \* Concierge
- \* 24-hour Front Desk
- \* 24-hour Business Center
- \* 24-hour Fitness Center
- \* Free Wi-Fi Access in all Guest Rooms
- \* Indoor / Outdoor Heated Pool
- \* Room Service
- \* Complimentary DFW International Airport Shuttle
- \* District Trolley Stop
- \* PURE™ Allergy Friendly Room
- \* Free Self-Parking
- \* A Variety of Restaurants Nearby

*We look forward to seeing you in Arlington!*



## OTGR Southwest Region

(AZ; CO; NM; UT)

### **NMDOH and NMDVS Propose Streamlining State Veterans Home to Improve Services for New Mexico's Veterans**

**Santa Fe, NM** – Today, the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and the Department of Health (DOH) proposed streamlining the State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences to improve services for New Mexico's veterans. The proposal, if approved by the legislature, will move management of the State Veterans Home from DOH to DVS, aligning both state and federal resources to better serve our veterans. "The Department of Health and Department of Veterans Services have had a long-standing working relationship and have developed this plan to serve our veterans and their families in the best way possible," said Governor Susana Martinez. "This transition takes an important step to improve government efficiency by ensuring that we are better utilizing our resources."

The care veterans receive at the state veterans' home will be further enhanced by allowing the NMDVS to utilize its connections with the VA Health Care System, the VA regional benefits office, and other organizations that serve veterans. The move also brings New Mexico in line with the model used by most states in the nation of management of state veterans' homes by state veterans' departments instead of by state health departments.

NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox said that day-to-day operations at the veterans home will not be affected by the change. "Because our sole mission is service for all veterans in New Mexico, we will rely on the current facility administration and staff to continue its excellent level of service for the residents to help us fulfill our mandate of 'Serving Those Who Served.'"

Secretary Fox also said that current facility director Colleen Rundell and her entire administrative staff will not only remain, but are looking forward to becoming an integral part of the NMDVS. "We've had an excellent relationship with Colleen ever since she assumed the director's position this past February," Fox said. "We look forward to having her leadership for many more years to come." NMDOH Secretary Lynn Gallagher and NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox are scheduled to meet with state veterans' home residents, staff, legislators, and local community leaders this week to discuss the transition plan. In order for the change to take effect, state lawmakers will have to pass legislation during the upcoming legislative session to make changes to state statute.

The New Mexico State Veterans' Home is located on sixteen acres and offers 135 nursing home and ten assisted-living beds. The state-of-the-art facility was established as the state's only state veterans home in 1985. In May of 2015, the VA awarded a \$17.1 million grant to the facility for the construction of a 59-bed expansion project to include a 39-bed Alzheimer's unit, a 20-bed Skilled Nursing Unit, a new rehabilitation section for inpatient and outpatient services, and a new pool.



## SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 21, 2017



### HOPI CODE TALKERS RECOGNITION DAY EVENT

Looking for talented writers or artists to submit a theme and poster design to promote and celebrate Hopi Code Talkers (HCTs) Recognition Day on April 21, 2017. Here is criteria:

1. For theme, keep your wording, total of both English and/or Hopi, between 10 to 12 words.
2. Your theme or poster design can center on:
  - HCTs use of Hopi language during World War II.
  - HCTs exploits celebrated, remembered and honored.
  - HCTs legacy inspires our Hopi youth today.
  - Speaking our native language is important.
3. Submit your theme or poster design by February 15, 2017 to Hopi Veterans Services. Or you can e-mail your submissions to [ETalas@hopi.nsn.us](mailto:ETalas@hopi.nsn.us). The office is located in the H.O.P.I. Cancer Support Services Office, at Kykotsmovi, AZ.
4. The theme and poster winners will receive a small replica of the Congressional Hopi Code Talker Gold Medal. GOOD LUCK!

#### NEXT PLANNING MEETING

Thursday, January 26, 2017

H.O.P.I. Cancer Support Services Conference room

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

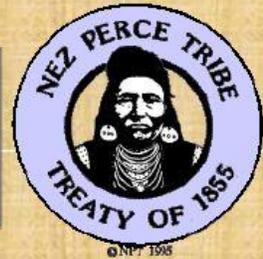
Volunteer your talents and skills to help plan or assist with this year's event and activities in April. For more information on the theme and poster design contest or the 2017 Hopi Code Talkers Recognition Day, please contact us at (928) 734-3461.

*Open to everyone and bring a friend!*



## OTGR Western Region

(AK; CA; ID; NV; OR; WA)



### Veterans Training Summit Save the Date - June 14-16, 2017



Clearwater River Casino  
Lewiston, Idaho  
Hotel Reservations: 208-298-1400  
\$70/rooms

- Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) Training
- Information on VA benefits and services
- Subject Matter Experts to assist Veterans
- Mobile Medical Unit
- Mobile Vet Center
- Veteran Resource Booths

Please register at: [terry.bentley@va.gov](mailto:terry.bentley@va.gov)  
Reserve resource booth: [terry.bentley@va.gov](mailto:terry.bentley@va.gov)

Questions contact:  
Mary Taylor at 208-621-4738  
Terry Bentley at 541-440-1271