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## VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ November/December 2016

### Note from the Director

Happy Holidays! Welcome to our special combined November/December 2016 edition of VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) newsletter. November and December proved to be busy months as I'm sure they have been for our readers. November 11 was Veterans Day and here in Washington, D.C. VA Secretary Bob McDonald was very honored to have the opportunity to offer his personal regards to 43 Native Veterans during a reception hosted by the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The Veterans traveled to D.C. as part of the Honor Flight program. November is also National Native American Heritage Month and we were fortunate that the NMAI generously allowed us to use their history of Native Americans in the armed forces exhibit to display in the VA headquarters lobby throughout the month. NMAI curator emeritus and author of the National Geographic book "Warriors in Uniform," Herman J. Viola was our guest speaker and he provided a rich over view of the legacy and history of Native peoples who served in the U.S. military. Mr. Viola is also part of the NMAI effort (as mandated by Congress) to establish a National Native Veterans Memorial on the grounds of the NMAI. Here is the link to more information about the Native Veteran Memorial effort: <https://nmai.si.edu/nnavm/>. NMAI leadership and Memorial Committee members will continue to engage in tribal consultation on the project moving into 2017, so any information that we become aware of, we'll make sure to share with our contacts.

Looking west, our tribal government relations specialist for part of the VA Continental District, Mary Culley, was hard at work supporting the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Inter-Tribal Homeless Veterans Stand Down (The Stand Down assisted native and non-native Veterans alike.) which was held at the Cox Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City. The event had tremendous collaborative support from 14 tribes within the state, including generous support from the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board, Oklahoma City VA Health Care System (OKVAHCS), Tinker Air Force Base, the Oklahoma National Guard, the U.S. Public Health Service/Indian Health Service and many other tribal, federal, state and non-profit partners. Chickasaw Nation Lt. Governor Jefferson Keel, who is himself a retired U.S. Army Officer and Veteran advocate, graciously offered plenary remarks and engaged in visiting with attendees, clinicians and providers. His presence and support were much appreciated and we look forward to continuing to work with him in the days ahead.

Since the Stand Down, Mary has remained busy, traveling with VBA representatives to the headquarters of the Alabama Coushatta Tribe (where she also offered the Veterans Day Keynote Address) to facilitate stronger communications and scope out possible collaborative opportunities between the tribe and the VA. Back home in Oklahoma, she's continued to work on providing training and technical assistance to providers as part of the national implementation of Tribal HUD VASH, participating in the OKC VAHCS 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Honor (Gourd) Dance and participating in the Oklahoma Governor's Strategic Planning Session focused on gaps in mental health services for Veterans, their families and active duty service members. Looking ahead to the coming year, Mary is working to link VHA and VBA to the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board Public Health Conference which is coming up in April of 2017. More information will be forthcoming.

Moving just a little further west to Arizona, our tribal government relations specialist Homana Pawiki secured VA presenter support for the regional Centers for Medicare Medicaid Services training offered to IHS, Tribal Health Program and Urban Indian Health Program staff. Homana then coordinated support for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Hopi Tribe Health Collaborative meeting which was held in Flagstaff, AZ and assisted Navajo Nation leadership and representatives with planning the Navajo Nation Veterans Summit which was also held in Flagstaff, AZ. She'll be

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closer to Phoenix by mid-December when she's scheduled to participate in a strategic American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans Engagement Plan for the Phoenix area to be held on the Salt River reservation.

Way out west (☺), our tribal government relations specialist, Terry Bentley, helped coordinate a Veterans Summit hosted by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Indian Reservation during the early part of November. Terry also represented our VA Intergovernmental Affairs Deputy Secretary on December 7 at the 75<sup>th</sup> Pearl Harbor commemoration ceremony in Honolulu, HI. Back home, Terry is working on 2 Veterans Summits for the new year, the first one will be held in June and hosted by the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho, a second summit will also be held in June, likely location will be Northern Nevada.

Out in the Midwest, Peter Vicaire has been co-planning the Oglala Lakota Veterans Opportunity Workshop, which is taking place on December 15-16 at the Journey Museum in Rapid City, SD. The agenda can be found below. This event is a collaborative effort of the Oglala Lakota Nation, the USDA and OTGR. I'm looking forward to attending this event and the opportunity it provides to conduct outreach and connect tribal leaders, Veteran service providers and Veterans to key points of contact across VA and other agencies who can continue to increase access to care, benefits and promote economic sustainability for our Veterans across Indian Country. Peter has also traveled to the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians in Manistee, MI, to provide updates to the United Tribes of Michigan. Most recently he briefed tribal leaders at a Minnesota Indian Affairs Council meeting as well as at a Bemidji IHS Area Tribal Budget Formulation Meeting.

As we move into the holiday season, I would like to pause and reflect on how honored, blessed and thankful I am to serve our Veterans. If any of our readers would like to connect with us directly, I encourage you to reach out by emailing us: [tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov](mailto:tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov). I look forward to hearing from you, meeting you and hopefully working with you on projects that support our Veterans in the coming year.

Warm Regards,

Stephanie

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.

## United Tribes of Michigan Passes Resolution Urging Congress to Restore Illegally Taxed Wages

The United Tribes of Michigan joins the Four Tribes of Kansas, the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma and the National Congress of America Indians to pass similar resolutions.

### *United Tribes of Michigan*

5453 Hughston Rd, Harbor Springs, Michigan 49740  
Phone: 517-802-8650 --- Email: [fettawa@charter.net](mailto:fettawa@charter.net)

*Frank Ettawageshik, Executive Director*

#### RESOLUTION # 048 10-26-2016

#### *United Tribes of Michigan Support of Legislation to Address the Improper State Taxation of Reservation-Domiciled Service members*

**WHEREAS**, the membership of United Tribes of Michigan (UTM) is open to all of the twelve federally recognized tribes located in Michigan; and

**WHEREAS**, the organization provides a forum for the Tribes in Michigan to address issues of common concern and is committed to join forces to advance, protect, preserve and enhance the mutual interests, treaty rights, sovereignty, and cultural way of life of the sovereign Indian Tribes of Michigan throughout the next seven generations; and

**WHEREAS**, UTM accepts the mission to engage, as a matter of mutual concern, issues that impact the health, security, safety, and general welfare of Native Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indians have fought in every war for the United States since the American Revolution and currently serve in the United States Armed Forces at a higher rate than any other ethnic group, many having paid the ultimate sacrifice for their effort; and

**WHEREAS**, federal law prohibits states from taxing the pay of military service members who are not a domiciliary of that state; and

**WHEREAS**, for up to twenty-four years, the U.S. Department of Treasury improperly withheld military pay for states, from American Indian service members domiciled on reservations in twenty-six states; and

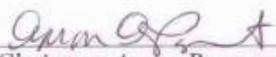
**WHEREAS**, honoring the dedication of American Indian service members and veterans and upholding the federal trust responsibility are both moral and legal reasons for the United States Congress to restore pay to eligible American Indian veterans and service members who had state income tax illegally withheld from their military pay by

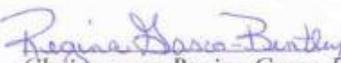
the Department of Treasury.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the United Tribes of Michigan does hereby call upon its members and member Tribes to urge Congress to restore pay to eligible service members and veterans who were illegally taxed by the state in which they were domiciled on their reservation during their time of military service; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of UTM until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution

*Adopted by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining, at a meeting of the United Tribes of Michigan held on 10-26-2016.*

  
Chairman Aaron Payment  
UTM President

  
Chairwoman Regina Gasco Bentley  
UTM Secretary

You can read the 2013 [NCAI Resolution here](#), which urges Congress, at a national level, to return these lost wages to those Native American veterans who were wrongly taxed. This illegal taxation happened for 24 years, from 1977 through 2001. The State of New Mexico adopted legislation in 2008 to return these improperly-held taxes but there are still 24 states remaining who have not returned these monies: Alabama; California; Colorado; Connecticut; Idaho; Iowa; Kansas; Louisiana; Maine; Massachusetts; Michigan; Minnesota; Mississippi; Montana; Nebraska; New Mexico; New York; North Carolina; North Dakota; Oklahoma; Oregon; Rhode Island; South Carolina; Utah and Wisconsin.

In May of this year, the Arizona House of Representatives passed a bill, [H.B. 2323](#), which created a \$2,000,000 fund to compensate Native American veterans who were domiciled on tribal lands in Arizona and had state income taxes improperly withheld while on active military service. The bill also establishes a process whereby Native American veterans in Arizona can recover those state income taxes that were withheld.

For more information on this issue, please contact [Peter.Vicaire@va.gov](mailto:Peter.Vicaire@va.gov)



The Rural Connection • Fall 2016

## Tribal Tradition Meets Telemental Health Technology

By Maichi Halley, Communications Specialist, Office of Rural Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



One focus of VA's tribal telemental health is to provide culturally sensitive care to American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans.

After serving in the military, Veterans may experience mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Like other Veterans that live in rural communities, American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations can be at a disadvantage to access mental health treatment due to the rural location of most tribes. There are more than 346,600 Veterans who identify as AI/AN in the U.S., which is why making health care accessible through telehealth is such an important initiative for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Office of Rural Health.

In 2001, W.J. "Buck" Richardson Minority Veterans Program Coordinator at the VA Montana Healthcare System and James Floyd, Director, Salt Lake City Medical Center in Utah, collaborated to create the Tribal Veterans Representative (TVR) program. In 2002, they met Jay Shore, a psychiatrist who leads the AI/AN program for the University of Colorado and a clinic at Rose Bud Sioux in South Dakota. They recognized that through collaboration to open new clinics, they could increase effectiveness of and access to mental health treatment for AI/AN Veterans. With support from tribal health sites, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Indian Health Service (IHS), and VA's Office of Rural Health, services spread to Montana and Wyoming. This expansion was the beginning of what VA now refers to as tribal telemental health.

VA provides mental health services through technology such as video teleconferencing, Jabber, and point-to-point connectivity to IHS systems. These technologies connect

Veterans on reservations with VA providers who work with members of the Tribal Outreach Workers (TOW) and TVR programs to provide support. TOWs are tribe member VA employees that conduct on-the-ground coordination, technical troubleshooting, and trust-building for Veterans within their communities. TVR focuses on outreach to identify Veterans on reservations that may find the program and VA benefits applicable to their needs.

One focus of tribal telemental health is to provide culturally sensitive care to AI/AN Veterans. For instance, patients often prefer privacy and autonomy during their visits. Because telemental health delivers care via technology, sessions are more private with the provider, eliminating potentially uncomfortable or unfamiliar settings during face-to-face care, such as open waiting rooms. Virtual sessions are conducted in private, closed rooms with large monitors and soothing noise machines. Also, the ability to coordinate with the TOW and TVR to schedule sessions creates another level of service for AI/AN Veterans seeking mental health treatment.

Another way that VA integrates culturally sensitive care is through work with traditional healers to implement sweat lodges as part of patient treatment, during which heated rocks are placed, songs are sung, and/or prayers are offered for spiritual healing, depending on the tribe. "There are 64 federally recognized tribes and other non-federally recognized nations in Veterans Integrated Service Network 19 alone," Richardson observed. "The key for the program is to balance the unique needs of each nation, to find out what each is trying to do, and what the Veterans in these clinics are really asking for." Multiple facilities, such as VA medical centers in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Fort Harrison, Montana, already integrate sweat lodges as part of their mental health treatment programs.

Following the success of the first site at Rose Bud Sioux in South Dakota, other VA facilities expressed interest in setting up tribal telemental health services, tailored to their local needs. Similar services expanded to AI/AN communities in Alaska, Michigan, and, most recently, five sites in separate Oklahoma nations. "I'm proud of everyone involved who helped the program expand and increase access to care. It was a collaborative achievement to work through obstacles, keep building the clinics, to get to where we are now after starting with just one small site," Richardson said. As a longer-term vision, however, Richardson is less concerned with growth and more with meeting need. His priority is to continue to integrate more traditional, supplemental healing rituals such as medicine wheels and sweat lodge gatherings into the program.

(Continued on page 7)



#### The Rural Connection - Fall 2016

##### Tribal Tradition Meets Telemental Health Technology (continued from page 6)

"We hope to make a difference in Veterans' lives and improve access for them and their families," said Richardson.

To learn more about tribal telemental health, visit <http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/media/american-indian-telemental-health.aspx> or watch the "American Indian Telemental Health" video (<http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/media/american-indian-telemental-health.aspx>).

*Editor's note: W.J. "Buck" Richardson is a member of the [Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee](http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/aboutus/vrhac.asp) (<http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/aboutus/vrhac.asp>), where he brings his experience of tribal telemental health to the Committee as it studies and analyzes the challenges rural Veterans face when accessing health care. ♦*



## Taos Pueblo veterans get new wheels

Here's an article by Cody Hooks which ran in [The Taos News](#).

"Imagine needing to get to Santa Fe or even Albuquerque for a doctor appointment but with no way to get there. That's a reality faced everyday by some veterans at Taos Pueblo.

Wounded Warriors Family Support (WWFS), a veterans advocacy organization, donated a 2016 Ford Explorer to the tribe to help out those veterans for whom time and distance are major roadblocks to health care. It was dedicated during a ceremony Oct. 17, which featured a procession on the Pueblo with Taos Pueblo government officials and a group of Pueblo men that were singing a parade song. Col. John D. Folsom, of WWFS, told *The Taos News* his organization has donated 22 vans to different tribes over the last year, including one at Jemez Pueblo.

Taos Pueblo Governor Benito M. Sandoval told those in attendance Monday that while many veterans had passed, the donated van will serve those still in the community "who put their lives on the line for our freedom...to see the sun rise every day and the moon rise every night."



## Standing Rock Veterans Cemetery

Here's a press release from Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Dept. of Veterans Affairs.



Standing Rock Sioux Tribe  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Fort Yates ND 58538

November 7, 2016

### Press Release

The Standing Rock Department of Veterans Affairs has been selected for the Veterans Affairs Veterans Cemetery Grants Program. The grant assists by providing gravesites to Veterans through establishing cemeteries in locales including federally recognized tribal governments, states and territories. A presentation of the grant announcement was held at the Standing Rock Tribal Council Chambers in Fort Yates last week Thursday, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> with Standing Rock Chairman Dave Archambault II presiding. Representing the grants program were George Eisenbach Jr., Director, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program and Howard Orr, Program Manager, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's National Cemetery Administration.

Cemeteries must be operated solely for the burial of service members who die on active duty, veterans, and their eligible spouses and dependent children.



Howard Orr (l); George Eisenbach Jr. (c) and Chairman Archambault II (r)



## Eligibility Determinations For Burial – In Advance of Need

Many individuals would like to know, in advance, whether they are eligible for burial in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemetery. To assist them, VA is launching an initiative, the “Pre-Need Eligibility Determination Program,” specifically aimed at helping individuals with burial planning and making sure their wishes are known.

VA will upon request make pre-need determinations of eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery in advance of need. Having this information will help Veterans use the VA benefits they have earned, for their families and for themselves.

Once VA determines that individuals are eligible, those individuals will be entitled to the same benefits they would receive were a determination made at the time of need (time of death). These include any or all of the following, at no cost to the family:

- Burial in any open VA national cemetery, including opening and closing of the grave
  - Grave liner
  - Perpetual care of the gravesite
- Government-furnished upright headstone, flat marker or niche cover
  - [Burial flag](#)
  - [Presidential Memorial Certificate](#)

### Eligibility

The law provides eligibility for burial in a national cemetery to:

- Members of the armed forces
  - Veterans who have met minimum active duty service requirements as applicable by law and who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable
- Members of the reserve components of the armed forces are also eligible, provided they:
- Died while on active duty under certain circumstances, or while performing training duty;
    - Have 20 years of service creditable for retired pay; or
    - Were called to active duty and served the full term of service.

The Veterans’ spouse, minor children and under certain conditions dependent unmarried adult children are eligible for burial even if they predecease the eligible Veteran.

### Applying for Benefits

VA encourages Veterans and their spouses to apply for a pre-need burial eligibility determination. Authorized representatives can also apply on behalf of eligible claimants.

To apply, submit:



- [VA Form 40-10007](#), *Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery*; and
- Proof of military service, such as a DD Form 214, if available. If unable to locate proof of military service, apply anyway as VA will attempt to obtain military records necessary to make a determination.

Information should be submitted to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office by any of the following methods:

- Fax: 1-855-840-8299 (this is a toll-free number)
  - Email: [Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov](mailto:Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov)
- Postal mail: NCSO, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis MO 63151

Individuals do not need to request a pre-need burial determination to be eligible at the time of need. There is no obligation for those found eligible to be buried in a VA national cemetery.

### **What to Expect After Applying**

VA will review pre-need burial applications and provide written notice of a determination of eligibility (a decision letter). VA will save the information electronically for future reference and to expedite processing burial claims at the time of need.

Note: Applicants should save a copy of all documents submitted and the decision letter received. It is also a good idea to communicate with one's loved ones or estate planners where the documents are, and about the preference to be buried in a VA national cemetery.

### **At The Time of Need**

At the eligible individual's time of need (death), the family or personal representative responsible for making the final arrangements, should contact VA's National Cemetery Scheduling Office to request burial benefits. VA will confirm the pre-need eligibility determination and schedule the burial.

Because laws and personal circumstances change, VA will validate the pre-need decision using the laws in effect at the time VA receives the burial request. We will also check for any bars to receipt of the burial benefit.

Please note that applicants may indicate a preference for a VA national cemetery on the application form, but a pre-need determination of eligibility does not guarantee burial in a specific VA national cemetery or a specific gravesite. VA assigns gravesites in cemeteries with available space once death has occurred and the burial is scheduled.

**For More Information:** Additional information about the VA Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program is available on the VA website at <http://www.cem.va.gov/preneed>.



Public Affairs Office  
113 Comanche Road  
Ft. Meade, SD 57741  
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:  
Teresa Forbes, Public Affairs Officer  
605-720-7451 (Office)  
605-490-5074 (Cell)

## News Release

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 10, 2016

### **VA Black Hills Health Care System (VA BHHCS) Announces Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Reconfiguration of VA Black Hills Health Care System**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Black Hills Health Care System (BHHCS) announces the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding the proposal to reconfigure of our health care system. The document carefully evaluates the possible environmental effects of VA's preferred alternative to reconfigure as well as six alternatives. The Final EIS identifies the measures to mitigate adverse effects. It also addresses the comments received from Veterans, stakeholders, government agencies and members of the public during the comment period that was open from October 2015 to June 2016.

"The document is not a final decision; however, it is an important and necessary tool for making a final determination on the proposed reconfiguration of services and resources to provide high-quality, safe, accessible, and cost-effective care closer to where Veterans live", said Sandra Horsman, Director, VA BHHCS. "It has taken a lot of work and public involvement to get to this point". As a result of consultation and public input VA changed its preferred alternative to maintain a presence on the historic Hot Springs campus by providing outpatient care through a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Building 12.

The document is available on the website [www.blackhills.va.gov/vablackhillsfuture/](http://www.blackhills.va.gov/vablackhillsfuture/). Copies of the Final EIS are also available in the following locations: Hot Springs, Rapid City Downtown, Sturgis, Chadron, Alliance, Lied Scottsbluff, and Pierre (Rawlins Municipal) public libraries; as well as in Pine Ridge at the Oglala Lakota College Pine Ridge Center library on the high school campus.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 13, 2016

**VA Announces Funding Opportunity for Community Partners Working to End  
Veteran Homelessness**

WASHINGTON – Building on President Obama’s commitment to end Veteran homelessness, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is announcing the availability of funding for non-profit organizations and other groups that serve Veterans through VA’s Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. The SSVF program assists very low-income Veteran families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. These SSVF grants are available to current grantees seeking renewals and make new funding available for eight high-need communities.

VA relies on strong, targeted collaborations in key areas at federal and local levels and engages community partners to develop innovative and forward-thinking solutions that can lead to scalable and replicable models of service. SSVF grantees currently operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam, working within their communities to end or prevent homelessness among Veteran families.

“One of the things you learn in the Army is you never leave a soldier behind,” said Secretary McDonald. “Unfortunately, we’ve left some people behind, and they’re our homeless Veterans. VA is committed to achieving the goal of ending Veteran homelessness, and we won’t rest until every homeless Veteran has a place to call home.”

SSVF grantees typically serve Veterans with incomes below 30 percent of the area median income. Grantees must follow the housing first approach, which centers on permanently housing homeless Veterans quickly without preconditions and providing supportive services as needed. Additional SSVF requirements are that grantees engage in outreach to find and serve



Veterans in need, provide Veterans with case management, and assist them in obtaining VA and other public benefits. SSVF served nearly 150,000 Veterans and their family members in fiscal year 2016. As a result of these and other efforts, Veteran homelessness is down significantly since the launch of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in 2010. Since 2010, homelessness among Veterans had dropped by 47 percent.

For more information about VA's homeless programs, visit [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). The *Federal Register* notice of funding availability may be found at: [www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp). The application deadline is February 3, 2017 at 4p.m. EST.

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## WE LOSE 20 VETERANS TO SUICIDE EVERY DAY

Reaching out  
can help save  
a life



Learn the risks  
and warning signs  
of suicide  
—  
[afsp.org/signs](http://afsp.org/signs)

Let them  
know you  
care and have  
an honest  
conversation

If you're  
concerned,  
encourage them  
to get the help  
they need

### DO YOU KNOW A VETERAN WHO IS IN CRISIS?



#### VETERANS CRISIS TEXT



### HAVE YOU LOST A VETERAN TO SUICIDE?

TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
FOR SURVIVORS (TAPS)  
[taps.org](http://taps.org)

AFSP LOSS RESOURCES  
[afsp.org/loss](http://afsp.org/loss)

### MORE RESOURCES FOR VETS

GIVE AN HOUR  
[giveanhour.org](http://giveanhour.org)

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN  
VETERANS OF AMERICA (IAVA)  
[iava.org](http://iava.org)

VETS 4 WARRIORS  
[vets4warriors.com](http://vets4warriors.com)

For AFSP, the silver color represents the loss of a first responder, veteran or active military. Cut along the dotted line and post a selfie with this bracelet to Facebook using #StopSuicide and #VeteransDay.





## Social Security and Veterans Affairs Partnership Means Faster Disability Decisions for Veterans

By Kirk Larson  
Social Security Western Washington Public Affairs Specialist

The Social Security Administration announced the launch of a new Health IT initiative with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that enables all Social Security disability case processing sites to receive medical records electronically from all VA facilities. Veterans will receive a faster decision on their Social Security disability claim, speeding them and their dependents through this new process. Both agencies will save time and money with an automatic request through the eHealth Exchange.

The new Health IT program was tested successfully at Social Security locations around the country. On Veteran's Day, November 11, the eHealth Exchange went live, nationally, to all Social Security disability case processing sites.

Social Security requests nearly 15 million medical records annually from healthcare providers and organizations to make medical decisions on about three million disability claims. Medical documentation is essential to make a disability determination. Historically, the agency obtained medical records through a manual process (mail, fax, secure mail). This new national initiative puts in place an automated process to obtain medical records electronically without human intervention.

"VA is currently improving quality of life by enabling Veterans to share their health information with federal partners and integrating their data into a safe and secure health-related consumer application," said Dr. David Shulkin, Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs. "Currently, when eligible Veterans apply for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits the average wait time for Social Security to receive paper records from VA can take months; this partnership allows Social Security and VA to share the Veteran's health information electronically in minutes. The Social Security and VA partnership allows VA to continue to be a leader in interoperability efforts among federal partners while improving overall quality of life for our Veteran patients."

This partnership adds the VA to Social Security's more than 50 other Health IT partners, including the Department of Defense, in approximately 7,000 facilities across the United States providing electronic health records. Social Security's goal is to continue expanding the number of healthcare organizations and federal agencies providing electronic health records within a safe and secure environment.

To learn more about Health IT, please visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityssi/hit](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityssi/hit).

Social Security offers two other programs to expedite disability claims filed by veterans. Wounded Warriors and veterans with a VA disability compensation rating of 100% Permanent & Total have their Social Security disability claims treated as high priority and receive expedited decisions. For more information about these programs, please visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/people/veterans](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/people/veterans). To get more Social Security news, follow the Press Office on Twitter [@SSAPress](https://twitter.com/SSAPress).



## SUPPORTING OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS

By Kirk Larson  
Social Security Western Washington Public Affairs Specialist



Every Veterans Day, the nation honors the brave men and women who risk their lives to protect our country and the freedoms we cherish. Social Security honors veterans and active duty members of the military every day by giving them the support they deserve. A vital part of that is administering the Social Security disability program.

For those who return home with injuries, Social Security is a resource they can turn to for disability benefits. Social Security's Wounded Warriors website is at [www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors).

The Wounded Warriors website has answers to many commonly asked questions, and shares other useful information about disability benefits, including how veterans can receive expedited processing of disability claims. Benefits available through Social Security are different from those available from the Department of Veterans Affairs and require a separate application.

The expedited process is available to military service members who become disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs.

Even active duty military who continue to receive pay while in a hospital or on medical leave should consider applying for disability benefits if they're unable to work due to a disabling condition. Active duty status and receipt of military pay doesn't necessarily prevent payment of Social Security disability benefits. Although a person can't receive Social Security disability benefits while engaging in substantial work for pay or profit, receipt of military payments should never stop someone from applying for disability benefits from Social Security. Learn more by visiting [www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors).

With over 80 years of experience and compassionate service, Social Security is proud to support our veterans and active duty members of the military. Let these heroes know they can count on us when they need to take advantage of their earned benefits, today and tomorrow.



## Announcing Social Security Administration's National Tribal Benefits Coordinator Guide/Map

Here's a note from Nancy Berryhill, Tribal Consultation Official for the Social Security Administration

“During the month of November, we observe Native American Heritage Month to celebrate and recognize the significant contributions of the American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) community. As an agency, we welcome opportunities to serve the evolving needs and diverse populations of the American public. For those of American Indian descent who often face unique challenges in accessing and understanding our complex programs, we seek to expand our educational and outreach efforts and build more collaborative relationships with tribal governments.

As the agency's Tribal Consultation Official, I am committed to addressing the unique needs of tribal communities, improving government to government relationships, and expanding communications in Indian Country.

To provide American Indians with additional information on services provided by our agency, we collaborated with the Office of Open Government to launch the AIAN public-facing, geospatial map. The interactive AIAN map, allows users to find their local field office, resident station, or Video Service Delivery (VSD) site closest to their Tribe or Reservation location. For more information on the tribes in your servicing area, please access the AIAN map, at <https://www.ssa.gov/open/geospatial.html>.

I am also pleased to present the [Tribal Benefits Coordinator Guide](#). This resource provides tribes' benefit coordinators with accurate and up-to-date information on Social Security's benefit programs, service options, process for applying for benefits, online resources, and much more. The Tribal Benefits Coordinator Guide is also available on our [American Indians and Alaska Natives \(AIAN\) website](#), under the Publications section.

As we seek to better educate the public about our programs and improve accessibility to our services in Indian country, you will have an opportunity to take part in this important initiative. Each of the 567 federally recognized tribes received this guide, and may reach out to local field offices with questions. Thank you for your support and the work you do each day in your community serving the public.

Nancy Berryhill  
Deputy Commissioner for Operations  
Tribal Consultation Official”



Help for Homeless Veterans  
**877-4AID-VET**  
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838



Jim, formerly homeless Veteran  
Served 2004-2011

## ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

### Transforming the Homeless Provider Grant and Per Diem Program

The United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) largest transitional housing program — the Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program — is transforming so that VA and its community partners can more effectively serve Veterans. The transformation involves implementing a competitive, time-limited grant process that will require currently funded community providers to reapply for funding.

The transformation comes at a time when the number and range of other VA and federally funded housing services for homeless Veterans is greater and wider than it was over 20 years ago, when GPD was established. This means GPD is no longer the only source of grant funding provided to community partners. The new competitive process will give VA greater flexibility to allocate resources and the agility to respond to evolving best practices for homeless services and programs — to, ultimately, best serve our nation's Veterans.

With this transformation, **all Current Homeless Provider GPD Program grants (except Transition in Place awards) will expire on Sept. 30, 2017, and grantees must reapply for projects and per diem awards for fiscal 2018.** VA anticipates publishing a Notice of Funding Availability with details of the application requirements by the end of the 2016 calendar year.

### About VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD)

The GPD program allows VA to award grants to community-based agencies to create transitional housing programs and offer per diem payments. The purpose is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income and obtain greater self-determination.

### Program highlights through September 2016:

- VA's largest transitional housing program with over 13,800 beds nationwide.
- Over 25,000 Veterans entered GPD transitional housing.
- More than 16,500 homeless Veterans exited GPD to permanent housing.
- 402 Transition in Place model housing units operational.
- Average length-of-stay in GPD: **179 days** (lowest since FY 2009).
- 130 grantees have worked with VA to adopt bridge housing models.

More information: [www.va.gov/homeless/GPD.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/GPD.asp)



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# VA DIRECT HOME LOANS FOR NATIVE AMERICANS LIVING ON TRUST LAND

Helping You Use the Benefits You've Earned



## How to Apply for a Loan

- Check whether your tribal organization has a Memorandum of Understanding with VA to participate in the program.
- Log on to [www.eBenefits.va.gov](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov) to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility or submit a paper application (VA Form 26-1880) to the Atlanta Eligibility Center.
- Contact your local VA Regional Loan Center to learn more.
- Find a home and sign a purchase agreement or contract with a homebuilder.

## NADL Program Benefits

- No downpayment
- No private mortgage insurance
- Low fixed interest rate
- Low closing costs
- Up to \$417,000 in most areas, more in high-cost areas such as Alaska and Hawaii
- Reusable benefit



For more information, visit  
[www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/nadl.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/nadl.asp)  
or call 1-877-827-3702.

## OTGR Central Region

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



### OGDLA LAKOTA VETERANS OPPORTUNITY WORKSHOP

December 15-16, 2016 | Journey Museum | Rapid City, SD | FREE

#### A G E N D A

**Workshop Purpose:** To showcase business, employment, and homeownership opportunities for Oglala Lakota veterans and to share information about federal, state, and tribal veterans benefits at a resource fair and the US Department of Veterans Affairs Mobile Vet Center.

Day One – Thursday, December 15, 2016

8:00 - 9:00 am      *Registration and Continental Breakfast*

8:00 am to 4:30 pm      *Resource Fair and Mobile Vet Center Open*

9:00 am              **Opening Ceremony, Prayer, and Welcome**  
Oglala Lakota Veterans Committee Honor Guard

**Master of Ceremonies**

Ramon Bear Runner, Oglala Lakota Veterans of the US Armed Forces

**Tribal Welcome**

Oglala Sioux Tribe President Scott Weston

**Federal and State Welcome**

Sandra Horsman, Director, US Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA), VA Black Hills  
Health Care System

Stephanie Birdwell, Director, US Dept. of VA, Office of Tribal Government Relations

Secretary Larry Zimmerman, SD Department of Veterans Affairs

Secretary Steve Emery, SD Department of Tribal Relations

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9:30 am	<p><b>Resources for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses</b>  Tawney Brunsch, Executive Director, Lakota Funds  Dustin Baird, Procurement Specialist, Native American Development Corporation  Dave Puls, Lead Lender Relations Specialist, Small Business Administration  Chris Haar, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinator, USDA Farm Service</p>
10:30 am	<p><i>Break</i></p>
10:45 am	<p><b>Homeownership Opportunities for Veterans</b>  Tawney Brunsch, SD Native Homeownership Coalition  Dean Eckes, US Dept. of VA, Native American Direct Home Loan  Colleen Steele, Mazaska Owecaso Otipi Financial  Vince Martin, Oglala Sioux Lakota Housing Authority  Roger Jacobs, HUD, Field Office Director  Elaine MatoTamaHece, Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing  Star Means, Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation  Jamie Van Norman, Housing Coordinator, NeighborWorks Dakota Home Resources</p>
11:45	<p><b>Pine Ridge Promise Zone</b>  Sam Ridders, Administrator, US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Rural  Business-Cooperative Service</p>
Noon	<p><i>Lunch and Resource Fair</i></p>
1:00 – 1:45 pm	<p><b>Breakouts Round One</b> – choose one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Burial and Memorial Affairs, Tribal Cemetery Grant Program and Veterans Legacy Program</b>  Adriene Benton, US Dept. of VA, National Cemetery Association  Bryce Carpenter, US Dept. of VA, Veterans Legacy Program</li> <li>• <b>Employment Training</b>  Jason Yeary, US Dept. of VA, Veterans Benefits Administration,  Vocational Rehabilitation  Sarah Bierman, US Dept. of Labor, Veterans Services  John Bolger, US Dept. of Labor, Registered Apprenticeships  Julie Ruggiero &amp; Bill McEntaffer, SD Dept. of Labor and Regulation, Apprenticeships  Kara Palmer &amp; Jerome Wickersham, SD Dept. of Labor and Regulation,  Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Jobs for Veterans State Grant</li> <li>• <b>Homeownership Counseling</b>  Dean Eckes, US Dept. of VA, Native American Direct Home Loan  Elaine MatoTamaHece, Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing  Star Means, Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation  Jamie Van Norman, Housing Coordinator, NeighborWorks Dakota Home Resources</li> </ul>

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2:00 – 2:45 pm

**Breakouts Round Two** – choose one of the following:

- **Financial Planning Issues: Pension Benefits, Survivors Benefits, & Insurance**  
Doug Smook & Rob Andresen, US Dept. of VA, Veterans Benefits Administration, Compensation & Pension  
Michele Anderson, Survivor Benefits, SD Survivor Outreach Services  
Tyler Bowling, Social Security Administration (SSA)  
Scott Marchant, SSA Group Supervisor, Disability Adjudication & Review
- **Services for Women Veterans**  
Jessica Drenning, Women Veterans US Dept. of VA
- **Individual Water, Sewer & Utilities Services**  
Mike Boland & James Begeman, Indian Health Services, Individual Services Program  
Lance Lockwood, USDA Rural Development

3:00

**Health Benefits**

Randee Figuracion, Patient Services Supervisor/Enrollment Coordinator, US Dept. of VA  
Dr. Sandra Ogunremi, Regional Health, Native American Collaboration  
Chris Zielke, Telehealth, US Dept. of VA  
Janice SanGrait, Home Based Primary Care, US Dept. of VA,

4:15 pm

**Wrap-up – Preview of Tomorrow**

4:30 pm

**Adjourn**

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Day Two – Friday, December 16, 2016

8:00 - 9:00 am	<i>Registration and Continental Breakfast</i>
8:00 am to 3:30 pm	<i>Resource Fair and Mobile Vet Center Open</i>
9:00 am	<b>Welcome Back</b>
9:15 am	<b>Pine Ridge Ag Economy Initiative</b> Alana (Cannon) Kuhn, USDA Rural Development Joseph Kirk, USDA Rural Development Chris Haar, USDA Farm Service Agency Trudy Ecoffey, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Agency
10:15 am	<i>Break</i>
10:45 am	<b>Substance Abuse Prevention Services</b> Chelsea Streeter, Substance Use Disorder Program, US Dept. of VA Stacy Bruels & Janelle Keller, Division of Behavioral Health, SD Dept. of Social Services
Noon	<i>Lunch Provided and Resource Fair</i>
1:30 pm	<b>PTSD/Mental Health Resources</b> Amanda Wetz, PTSD Program Coordinator, US Dept. of VA Rod Bordeaux, Telehealth, US Dept. of VA
2:45	<i>Break</i>
3:00 pm	Healing Ceremony for Veterans
3:15 pm	<b>Wrap-up and Closing Ceremony</b> Oglala Lakota Veterans Committee Honor Guard
3:30 pm	<b>Adjourn</b>

***Thank You to our Sponsors***

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians  
Wounded Warriors Family Support  
Dacotah Bank  
Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines  
1st Tribal Lending  
AMERIND Risk



**BREAKFAST  
FUNDRAISER  
DECEMBER 17, 2016  
ONEIDA NATION VETERANS BUILDING  
134 RIVERDALE DR.  
7 AM – 11 AM OR UNTIL GONE  
“YES IT IS” ALL YOU CAN EAT**

**\$8.00 12 YRS AND UP  
\$4.00 11 YRS TO 5 YRS**

## OTGR Southern Plains Region

(KS; OK; TX)



# 12-25-16 BUNKER CHRISTMAS PARTY!!!!

### **Bunker Christmas!!**

Every year we have a Christmas party for all those who wish to spend their holiday with us and their Coffee Bunker family. We will be having crafts, gifts, snacks, movies and two wonderful meals at noon and 1700. Do not miss out on the fun and bring your family!!! Be sure to sign up for gifts before the party so we can make this a truly Merry Christmas for ALL!!!!!!



**Guess Who Is  
Coming To The  
Coffee Bunker?!?!?**

**All Day Christmas  
Party At The Coffee  
Bunker On  
Christmas Day!!**

**Fun And Games For  
The Whole Family!!**

**Santa And His Elves  
Will Be There To  
Pass Out Gifts To All  
The Good Children!!**

**Meals At Noon And  
5PM Don't Miss Out**

### **COFFEE BUNKER**

6365 East 41st Street  
Tulsa OK 74135

[www.coffeebunker.org](http://www.coffeebunker.org)

Doors Open at 11Am  
If You Have A Veteran Child  
Who Needs Presents From  
Santa This Christmas Sign  
Up ASAP!!!!!!



**Register Now!**  
Put on your wish list for Christmas!  
**February 12-15, 2017**  
(Registration and Welcome Reception on the 12th)  
**Today's No. 1 Native America  
Killer—Diabetes**  
Explore Trending Topics and  
Diabetes Prevention

**19th Annual Native Diabetes  
Prevention Conference**

Post Conference Opportunities

- Fitness Training — 2-1/2 days (February 15-17)
- Stresscare Mastery & Mentor Training —  
2-1/2 days (February 15-17)

Hilton Phoenix Mesa  
February 12-15, 2017  
Phoenix, Arizona

Featuring Keynote Speaker  
**J. Neil Henderson (Choctaw)**



Director, The American Indian  
Diabetes Prevention Center  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Director, Memory Keepers  
Medical Discovery Team  
and Health Equity Professor,  
Department of Behavioral Health and  
Population Sciences,  
University of Minnesota Medical School,  
Duluth, Minnesota

  
aii.ou.edu  
(405) 325-4127



*Hilton Phoenix Mesa*



## Save the Date! Register Now!

Put on your wish list for Christmas!  
**16th Annual Native Women's  
and Men's Wellness Conference**  
April 17 – April 20, 2017  
San Diego, California



©2016 Marriott International, Inc.

### Post Conference Opportunities

- Fitness Training — 2-1/2 days (April 20-22)
- Stresscare Mastery & Mentor Training — 2-1/2 days (April 20-22)
- Activating Your Potential

### Featuring Keynote Speakers



**Emma Seppälä**  
Science Director, Stanford University's  
Center for Compassion and  
Altruism Research and Education,  
author of *The Happiness Track*



**Ross Urken**  
author of the *Newsweek* article  
"A Tribe Called Cancer"



**Dr. Brad Nelson**  
author of *The Emotion Code*

Brought to you by the  
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# 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	Peter Luitwieler <a href="mailto:pluitwieler@csctulsa.org">pluitwieler@csctulsa.org</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	Foundations 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 Letho <a href="mailto:sletho@okfoodbank.org">sletho@okfoodbank.org</a>
Thursdays 9:30 AM Kirk of the Hills Church	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 Letho <a href="mailto:sletho@okfoodbank.org">sletho@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>
Thursdays 5:30 PM Tulsa YWCA 8145 E 17th St	Yoga for Vets	
Fridays 12:30 PM Coffee Bunker	The Community Foodbank of Eastern Oklahoma Mobile Eatery	Steve Letho <a href="mailto:sletho@okfoodbank.org">sletho@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>



## Recurring Events for Service Members



Date	Event	Contact
Saturdays 12:00 PM—1:00 PM Coffee Bunker	Fighting Addiction	<a href="http://www.coffeebunker.org">www.coffeebunker.org</a>
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="#">RWR 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="#">RWR 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="#">RWR Tulsa's Facebook Page</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	
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.mclschwabdet857.com/">http://www.mclschwabdet857.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>

## OTGR Southwest Region

(AZ; CO; NM; UT)

### BRIDGING THE GAP RETREAT



*Funded by Walter Reed Society in collaboration with Warriors at Ease*

A 4-day retreat for post 9/11 service members/veterans and a spouse, caregiver or primary support person aimed at improving the well-being of military families.

You will experience group support, education, stress-management skills and fun in a beautiful setting. Enjoy relaxation, canine therapy, yoga, equine therapy, outdoor activities, and more. Small group setting, facilitated by veterans, former VA/DoD experienced providers, volunteers & nonprofit support organizations.

*Past participant comment: "I feel that this weekend has restored my tattered spirit and renewed my optimism. I believe this has relit my candle so to speak and I've met people who can reflect my light back to me when things get dark and cold". -Iraq Vet*



**Date: 26-29 January, 2017**

**Location: Spirit of the Desert Retreat Center, Carefree, Arizona**

**For an application form please email [ybruner@hotmail.com](mailto:ybruner@hotmail.com)**

Note that both veteran and significant other attending must complete an application  
(Retreat will be limited to 10 pairs)

**Registration deadline: 19 December, 2016**

*Note: Accommodations & food are provided. Travel to & from the Retreat, as well as childcare are **not** included. \$50 refundable fee to reserve your place **if accepted**. Thank you!*

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Department Of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration



Flagstaff Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) invites you to our Open House Event January 19, 2017 from 3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m. at the Flagstaff Clinic located at 1300 W. University Ave. Suite 200, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

This is an opportunity for you to meet our providers, nursing staff and other clinical and clerical employees.

Invite your friends, families and neighbors to the event; they can tour the clinic, speak to the staff and learn about the services available for Veterans.

NAVAHCS Leadership is presenting the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Pin and Coin to our Vietnam Era Veterans.

Light refreshments will be available. Any questions, please contact the clinic at (928) 226-1056.

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Department Of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration



Dear Valued Veteran,

Flagstaff Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) would like to invite you to our Open House Event on **January 19, 2017 from 3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m.** at the Flagstaff Clinic located at 1300 W. University Ave. Suite 200 in Flagstaff, AZ. Light refreshments will be available and we would like to present the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Pin and Coin to our Vietnam Era Veterans. Any questions, please call (928) 226-1056.

With the recent Promotion of Dr. Denise Weil to the Eastern Regional Medical Director, she assists our Flagstaff clinicians with providing exceptional care for our Nation's heroes.



We hope to see you there and Thank You for Your Service!

With warm regards;

The Flagstaff CBOC staff

## Retreat Leaders



**Fr. Conrad Targonski** is a Franciscan Friar of the Assumption Province (Wisconsin) and was ordained a Catholic Priest in 1975. As a commissioned Naval Officer, he served over 22 years with the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps including 7th Marine Regiment as supervisory chaplain in OPERATION PHANTOM FURY (OIF 2.1-2.2), Fallujah, Iraq, 2004-2005. He retired with the rank of Navy Captain from the Marine Corps Combat Center in 29 Palms, CA in 2010. He is currently chaplain at Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI and is a team leader for the Veteran's Pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome.



**Greg Mastello** is a recently retired psychologist at the Albany Veterans Center in New York. Since 1998, Greg has assisted combat veterans with their reintegration to civilian life which includes: adjustment issues, family/marital distress, and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Greg served with the 42nd Aviation Brigade as a Liaison Officer in Iraq and also served 23 years in the New York Army National Guard as a pilot, training officer, and psychologist.



**Rev. Dr. Bill Reese** is Chair of the Religious Studies/Philosophy Department at Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI where he teaches World Religions and Holy Scripture. He is a decorated Vietnam Conflict veteran and served as a Lutheran pastor for 17 years before coming to Viterbo in 1995. He has completed several pilgrimages to Assisi, and recently made a solo return-trip to the Mekong River Valley in Vietnam.

## Franciscan Renewal Center

Peace. Renewal. Good.

*Nestled in the lush desert valley at the base of Camelback Mountain in Scottsdale, Arizona, the Franciscan Renewal Center (also known as "The Casa") is a unique and engaging venue. With comfortable sleeping accommodations, flexible meeting spaces and exceptional food, the Casa nourishes the body, inspires the mind and soothes the spirit. For over 65 years, the Franciscan Renewal Center has been renewing lives through spiritual growth, healing and transformation and serving others. All are welcome.*



**Franciscan Renewal Center**  
Peace. Renewal. Good.

Contact us at

**480.948.7460**  
[www.thecasa.org](http://www.thecasa.org)

The Casa  
5802 E. Lincoln Drive  
Scottsdale AZ 85253

Questions about the retreat?  
Sandra Provost 602.881.4478

# St. Francis: Journey of A Wounded Warrior Retreat



January 27-29, 2017  
Franciscan  
Renewal Center

All Veterans & Active Duty  
Service Members Welcome

# PEACE. RENEWAL. GOOD.

## St. Francis: Journey of A Wounded Warrior Retreat For Veterans and Active Duty Service Members

The retreat is designed to offer healing insights from one of the most beloved but misunderstood saints, St. Francis of Assisi. Most people don't know that St. Francis was a soldier and a prisoner of war who faced a number of hardships and challenges before undergoing a profound religious experience. In untangling the paradox of his life, this retreat will explore how the call of the warrior intersects with the call of spirituality.

The group will examine, from various perspectives, the challenges confronting veterans in light of the life of a saint who rose out of the ashes of combat to become an icon of peace. With this goal in mind, we will look at the life of St. Francis through the eyes of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey* and Harry Moody's *Five Stages of the Soul*. Please consider attending.

### Comments by Past Attendees

- *I'm so blessed and fortunate to have attended this retreat and felt a kindred spirit with other vets, which allowed me to decompress.*
- *This retreat gave me a deeper understanding of St. Francis and how my life directly relates to his.*
- *I learned to now put the past behind me and allow forgiveness of myself and others.*
- *This retreat reversed my thinking about going to Vietnam to payback for my friend's death in combat over there to realizing I need to love life more and Pay it Forward in service to others.*

Sands Ceremony 2016



2015 Retreat

### Registration Information

This retreat will be held at the Casa January 27-29, 2017. Check-in is Friday, from 5-6 p.m. with dinner at 6 p.m. The retreat concludes on Sunday at 1 p.m.

The cost of the retreat is \$175 for a double occupancy, which includes meals and lodging. Financial assistance is also available through a generous grant from the Arizona Community Foundation.

For more information, contact Sandra Provost at [casaveteransministry@thecasas.org](mailto:casaveteransministry@thecasas.org) or call 602.881.4478.



**72nd  
Anniversary  
Iwo Jima  
Flag Raising**

**Military Parade and  
Flyover to begin at 8:30 AM.  
Ceremonies to follow at the  
Mathew B. Juan, Ira H. Hayes  
Veterans Memorial Park in  
Sacaton, AZ.**

*All Public and Veterans Groups are welcome.*

**Feb. 25  
2017**

Luncheon hosted by American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 84 with St. Peters Church and School. Event sponsored by American Legion Ira H. Hayes Post No. 84 and Auxiliary Unit No. 84. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 186, Sacaton, AZ, 85147 / Phone: 520.562.8484 / Fax: 520.562.3297 / Email: ihpost84@gilanet.net  
Web: [www.iraheyest84.org](http://www.iraheyest84.org)

72<sup>nd</sup> ANNIVERSARY IWO JIMA FLAG RAISING COMMEMORATION PARADE - Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup> 2017  
 For contact info: Ira Hayes American Legion Post 84 (520)562-8484 or Tony McDaniel (520)610-0777 EMAIL  
 ADDRESS: [ihpost84@gilanet.net](mailto:ihpost84@gilanet.net) FAX: (520)562-3297

All active duty personnel, Veterans organizations, Schools, Bands, Church groups, Youth groups, Veteran representatives' and families, etc. are welcome to participate in this parade, honoring our veterans.

Parade line up & staging is at 7:00 a.m. Parade will begin at 8:45 a.m. sharp.  
 Parade staging is at 168 S. Skill Center Rd. Entry only allowed off of Seed Farm Rd. at the south end of Skill Center Rd. See Map for Parade Registration.

Parade Entry Title Organization or Family \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>	World War 2 Veterans	_____	Number in Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Veterans Group	_____	Number in Group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking or Marching	_____	Number in Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dignitary	_____	Number in Group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Color Guard	_____	Number in Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Royalty	_____	Number in Group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Band	_____	Number in Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	_____	Number in Group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Float	_____	ft. /Length of float and vehicle (Waiver Form Required for Vehicles)				

Announcement Biography: 50 words or less, type or print

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**\*NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES MAY BE CONSUMED PRIOR TO OR DURING YOUR PARTICIPATION IN PARADE ACTIVITIES. The possession of firearms is prohibited within the Gila River Indian Community with the exception of Law Enforcement and attending Color Guards.**

**WAIVER OF LIABILITY**

I/We voluntarily release Gila River Indian Community, The American Legion Ira H. Hayes Post 84, and any other sponsoring organizations and individuals or employees from any and all liability in any way, arising from injury, losses, and damages to person and property that might be sustained or received in connection with said parade.

I/We agree with the above

Entrants Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Entrants Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST COMPLETE WAIVER OF LIABILITY FOR THIS EVENT**

**VEHICLE PROOF OF INSURANCE (DRIVERS LICENSE WILL BE VERIFIED AT REGISTRATION TABLE)**

\*Every Driver in the Parade must complete this form.

Insurance Co. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Issue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle ID (VIN) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Year \_\_\_\_\_ Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_  
 Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR YOUR CONVIENCE, MANY SIGNS WILL BE POSTED DIRECTING YOU TO PARKING AND PARADE STAGING AREAS.**  
 Shuttle service will be provided to and from parade route.



You are cordially invited to

## U.S.VETS - Phoenix Open House

Tuesday, the Thirteenth of December  
Two Thousand and Sixteen  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. / 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Grand Veterans Village  
3400 W Grand Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85017

Site Tours

Lloyd Mehr, Development and Activities Coordinator  
lmehr@usvetsinc.org 623-432-2756

**ATTENTION VETERANS**

☆☆☆☆☆ BUCKEYE, AZ ☆☆☆☆☆

**VETERANS LIFT UP**  
☆☆☆☆ E V E N T ☆☆☆☆



**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH**  
8:00AM - 1:00PM  
Odyssey High School • 1495 S. Verrado Way • (1 Mile South of I-10)  
Complimentary Breakfast

**FEATURING**

- ★ Veterans Registration
- ★ West Valley Hospital Wellness Checks
- ★ Resume & Job Application Assistance
- ★ Job Services
- ★ Education Services and Much More!

**All Military Branches Welcomed!**



 Veterans needing a ride or for more information contact:  
Craig Heustis 623.349.6945 | Myra Curtis 623.349.6322