

## The Guardian

The monthly newsletter of the New Mexico Dept. of Veterans' Services September, 2023

•Website: www.nmdvs.org

Facebook: NMDVSHealthcare2015

Instagram: newmexicoveterans

#### Brig. Gen. Jamison Herrera Named **DVS Acting Cabinet Secretary**

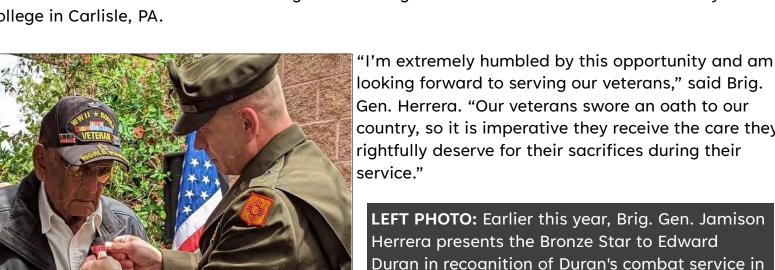
New Mexico Army National Guard Brigadier General Jamison Herrera has been appointed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham as acting cabinet secretary of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (DVS).

He assumed the role on September 1 and will remain serving until a permanent cabinet secretary is named. Brig. Gen. Herrera, who is also the NMNG's deputy adjutant general, will continue serving in that capacity as the Guard's second-in-command.

Brig. Gen. Herrera has served 34 years in the New Mexico Army National Guard. He enlisted as a private 1st class in 1989 as a member of the 515th Maintenance Battalion in Santa Fe before enrolling and then being commissioned as an officer through the Officer Candidate School in 1991.

The Nambe, NM native worked his way up the ranks and then serving in numerous leadership positions. Brig. Gen. Herrera earned a Bachelor of

Arts degree in University Studies, with and emphasis in education, from the University of New Mexico. He also earned a Master's Degree in Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College in Carlisle, PA.





Brig. Gen. Jamison Herrera **Acting DVS** Cabinet Secretary

looking forward to serving our veterans," said Brig. Gen. Herrera. "Our veterans swore an oath to our country, so it is imperative they receive the care they rightfully deserve for their sacrifices during their

**LEFT PHOTO:** Earlier this year, Brig. Gen. Jamison Herrera presents the Bronze Star to Edward <u>Duran</u> in recognition of Duran's combat service in World War II.



Johnny Martinez
VBOC Director

#### **VBOC Names New Director & Business Advisor**

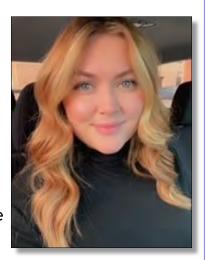
Johnny Martinez has been named director of the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)—the business development division of DVS. He was promoted this spring from his VBOC veterans' business advisor position and had been serving as the interim director for the past two months.

The Albuquerque native is an Army veteran and a proud former infantryman who served in Germany with the 1st Infantry Division ("the Big Red One.") He is a former program manager for the New Mexico Veterans Integration Center, and has extensive experience as a small business owner. He looks forward to expanding the VBOC's mandate of helping entrepreneurially-minded veterans, transitioning service members, and spouses who want to start their own business or expand an existing

operation. He can be reached at johnny.martinez@dvs.nm.gov or (505) 469-8501.

**Hope Fryer** is the new VBOC veterans business advisor who works with Martinez to help counsel veterans looking for entrepreneurial assistance. She had been working as an Albuquerque-based veterans' service officer.

The Albuquerque native is a Navy veteran who as a machinists' mate was deployed twice to the waters in the Middle East—with stops in Spain, Mallorca, and Djibouti, Africa. Prior to coming to DVS, she worked for a non-profit organization as an administrative coordinator specializing in working in the metro area coordinating fundraising and donations. Anyone needing help with their startup needs can contact Hope at <a href="https://hope.fryer@dvs.nm.gov">hope.fryer@dvs.nm.gov</a> or (505) 250-9967.



**Hope Fryer**VBOC Business Advisor



**Daisie Couch**DVS Albuquerque VSO

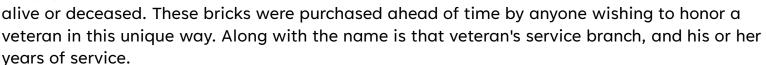
**Daisie Couch** has filled the Albuquerque VSO vacancy created by Hope Fryer's move to the VBOC. Daisie comes to DVS from the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD). As an eligibility interviewer and case manager, she was responsible for assessing the immediate need for care and placement of a child in appropriated programs, approving appropriate childcare placements, and processing payments and other financial transactions for childcare providers.

The native of Clio, MI, has a long history of working with at-risk youth and young adults in therapeutic crisis intervention. She looks forward to now helping veterans and families. Couch can be reached at <a href="mailto:daisie.couch@dvs.nm.gov">daisie.couch@dvs.nm.gov</a> or (505) 383-2400.

# More than 5,000 Memorial Bricks Laid at 2023 Angel Fire Bricklaying

More than 500 memorial bricks were on September 2 during the annual Labor Day weekend bricklaying ceremony at the DVS-managed Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire.

The bricks were placed along the pathways on the grounds of the popular monument. Each brick bore the name of a veteran--





Members of the Run For The Wall Foundation donated their time to lay the bricks. Three months ago, many of them stopped at the monument and spent the night in the area while riding in the annual Run For The Wall cross-country motorcycle ride to the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. DVS is producing a video showing highlights of the bricklaying ceremony. The video should be completed soon and will be posted on the DVS Facebook page.

#### **DVS Thanks Local Business for State Cemetery Trees Donation**





DVS State Benefits Division Director Edward Mendez (at right) and DVS Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery Supervisor Randy Myklebust (at left) presented a letter of appreciation and a framed DVS poster to *Trees of Corrales* Owner Court Koontz on August 30. The gesture was in appreciation of the company donating 28 Patmore Ash trees to the cemetery, which were planted along the entrance. (right photo). The disease and pest-resistant trees can grow to 70 feet tall and feature a 40-foot-wide canopy.

"The trees form a beautifully framed pathway into a place befitting of a final resting place for men and women who have sacrificed to serve and defend our country," read Director Mendez from the letter. "Your donation will truly enhance the visitation of families visiting their fallen loved ones. For this, my staff and I will always be grateful to you for your generosity. "

#### Recap of the 2023 Summer Honor Guard Training Conference



DVS, the New Mexico National Guard, and AARP/ New Mexico presented the 2023 New Mexico Honor Guard Summer Training Conference on August 25 at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial in Albuquerque.

The conference provides training for the all-volunteer honor guards that render military honors at many veterans' funerals in New Mexico. The highlight of the day was a competition between these units that rendered military honors for a mock funeral—which was graded by a panel of judges.

DVS has produced a short video that further

explains the importance of these honor guards—as well as showing highlights of the competition.

#### DVS Gives Summer Native American Veterans Quarterly Briefing at Isleta Pueblo

DVS Pueblos and Tribal Liaison Beverly Charley held a summer quarterly briefing with Native American veteran representatives on September 1 at the Isleta Pueblo Veterans Association.

Charley explained that Acting Cabinet Secretary
Jamison Herrera, who was just named to the
position (see page 1 for more info), plans on meeting



with the Native American veteran community soon to hear their concerns and plans. Vietnam War veteran Chuck Zobac (standing in photo), who is media chair at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial, also gave a presentation on behalf of the Honor Flight of Northern New Mexico program—of which he is also a board member. He urged the Native American representatives to spread the word about this program that provides free all-inclusive round trips for older veterans to visit the national war monuments at the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

"We would really love to see Native American veterans on future flights. It's the one segment of the veteran population that hasn't been represented," he said. "Please spread the word. Let Korean and Vietnam War veterans know--these flights are free, and to experience the monuments in the company of their fellow veterans is something special."

More information about the program can be found on the <u>Honor Flight of Northern New Mexico</u> <u>website</u>. DVS has produced <u>a short video highlighting the hero's welcome</u> provided to returning veterans when they returned to Albuquerque on June 23.



# Military & Veterans Day at the NM State Fair is September 12

Military veterans and National Guard/Reserve/ active-duty service members will be admitted free to the New Mexico State Fair for 2023 Military and Veterans Day at the State Fair on Tuesday, September 12.

This annual day at the state fair in Albuquerque is presented by DVS, the New Mexico National Guard, and the New Mexico State Fair to honor and thank the men

and women who have served our country as members of the United States military.

Veterans, National Guard/Reserve personnel, retirees, and active-duty service members must present either a valid Uniformed Services Retiree Identification Card, a veterans-designation driver's license, VA Veterans Health ID Card, or a copy of their DD-214 Separation Papers at the gate in order to obtain the free

admission. Veterans and active-duty personnel must still pay for parking at any fairground parking lot. Non-veteran/non-military spouses or family members are not eligible for the free admission. In addition to the numerous rides and attractions at the state fair, there will be dozens of booths, exhibits and information tables throughout the fairgrounds.

## 2023 New Mexico Forgotten Heroes Funeral Set for September 28

The unclaimed cremated remains of 54 military veterans will be laid to rest during the 2023 Forgotten Heroes Funeral on September 28.

A brief memorial mass will be held at 9 a.m. at the Albuquerque Calvary Church chapel at4001 Osuna Road NE. The 54 urns will then be loaded into hearses, which will receive a motorcycle escort by law enforcement and



members of the Patriot Guard Riders to the Santa Fe National Cemetery, at 501 North Guadalupe Street, for an 11 a.m. funeral service and interment.

The veterans are being provided this military funeral courtesy of New Mexico's Forgotten Heroes Burial Program, which was created by DVS and Bernalillo County to provide a military funeral for any honorably discharged veteran who, upon death, goes unclaimed by family or friends—ensuring that no veteran will ever be alone at the end.

The public is invited to attend and serve as "family" to provide a final salute for these 54 fallen veterans who have served our country.

# DVS To Provide Benefits Assistance at Three Upcoming "Stand Downs" For Homeless & Near-Homeless Veterans

DVS staff will provide benefits claims assistance at the following three upcoming "stand downs" for homeless and near-homeless veterans:



Albuquerque Sep. 28 (8 a.m. – 1 p.m.) The Rock at Noonday/2400 2<sup>nd</sup> St. NW For more info: (505) 296-0800 <u>Taos</u> Sep. 29 (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.) Taos Youth & Family Center/407 Paseo del Cañon East (575) 751-2000

Gallup Oct. 6 (9 a.m. – 3 p.m.)
Red Rock Park/757 Red Rock Park Drive
(505) 870-2415

\*The Ninth Annual Veterans Wellness Conference will be held the day before (October 5) from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the same location.

At all three stand downs, there will be free meals, food items, clothing, footwear, and many other items—along with additional services and programs from local veterans' and service agencies.



# Former DVS Cabinet Secretary Honored By Georgia State University

Former DVS Cabinet Secretary Jack Fox was selected by the Georgia State University Alumni Association as one of five recipients of the university's Distinguished Alumni Award—the organization's highest honor.

Fox, who served as DVS cabinet secretary from 2014-2018, will be celebrated along with the four other recipients at GSU's 60th annual Distinguished Alumni Award reception and ceremony in Atlanta on Oct. 13.

Jack Fox DVS Secretary (2014-2018) The retired New Mexico Army National Guard brigadier general was commissioned in 1969 as a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant after earning a bachelor's degree in government from New Mexico State University. Brig. Gen. Fox earned a master's degree in education from Georgia State while stationed

with the Army at Ft. Benning.

He remains active with the David Westphall Foundation, the NMSU Army ROTC Alumni Association, and the New Mexico Military Museum Foundation. He also attends many veterans' events in New Mexico—including many presented by DVS.

#### New Dates for the 2023 New Mexico Veterans Business Summit









Funded in part by a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration

# Veterans Community Bulletin Board

The following page(s) feature event and informational flyers provided to DVS by veterans and community service agencies. These flyers are published for the convenience of New Mexico's veteran community. Inclusion in The Guardian does not constitute an endorsement by DVS of the organization, content, products, or services contained therein.

DVS invites government agencies and <u>non-profit</u> service organizations to send flyers for publication in *The Guardian* announcing an upcoming or ongoing veteran-related event. DVS will run these flyers as a public service courtesy to the veteran community.

#### Please note:

- Flyers <u>must</u> have the name of a point-of-contact from the organization...along with the contact's phone number or email address. Flyers without this information will not be published.
- DVS is not responsible for the accuracy of the content, products, or services in these flyers.
- Views expressed in these flyers are the independent views of the authors/owners of the third-party entity that created the flyer—and does not necessarily reflect the views of DVS.
- To the maximum extent permitted by law, DVS expressly denies liability for any and all
  losses suffered by any persons or organizations who, in their independent discretion and
  reliance, either directly or indirectly rely on content, products, services or information
  offered by these independent third-party organizations.
- DVS reserves the right to edit or decline to publish any flyer.





The Office of Women's Health is hosting a live event to commemorate the



When: 1:00 PM ET, September 14, 2023

Where: G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery Conference Room, 810 Vermont Ave NW, Washington, DC, 20420

**Keynote Speaker: Secretary Denis R. McDonough**We invite you to participate in person.

Click here to WATCH LIVE at 1:00PM ET

# MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

WOMEN'S MST GROUPS WILL START ON FRIDAY,
9/15/23 @ 2 PM
MENS MST GROUPS WILL START ON THURSDAY,
9/14/23 @ 11 AM
\*CLOSED GROUPS WILL BE HELD FOR 6 WEEKS
AT THE EDUCATION CENTER

PLEASE CONTACT MST/OTH COORDINATOR,
CINDY SANDELIN (ONLY BY PROVIDER REFERRAL)
AT 505-265-1711 @ EXT. 5694
OR EMAIL: CINDY.SANDELIN@GMAIL.COM
OR IM ON TEAMS.



PRESENTED BY QUALIFIED LISTENERS

# VET CONNECT





**1ST ANNUAL REGIONAL EVENT** 

SAT, SEPT 16, 2023 1 P.M. TO 4 P.M.

- Meet other Veterans & families
- Meet our qualified resources
- Enjoy Camaraderie & meet others like you!
- Refreshments provided

FREE
ADMISSION
& PARKING

VETERANS MEMORIAL
1100 LOUISIANA BLVD SE
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87108

VetConnect.vet | 720-600-0860



**NEW MEXICO** 

If you are interested in being a sponsor for this event, this space is for you! We will place your logo here and you will automatically have a table at this event. Call us at 720-600-0860 to receive sponsorship levels, or visit our website at www.Vetconnect.vet and reserve a spot!



Mid-Rio Grande Retired and Senior Volunteer Program would like to invite you to be a Vendor at our Health Fair on October 13, 2023.

Location: Belen Business Center
719 S. Main Street
Belen, NM 87002
Time: 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM (set up at 8:00 AM)

- No registration fee for booth. Instead, please bring a door prize/gift
   (Gift cards, gift baskets, etc.)
  - · Lunch will be provided for all Vendors
    - Vendors must bring their own tables

Any questions or concerns, please contact Bertha Flores (505) 966-2567 or Chantel Apodaca (505) 966-2566



LIFE TRANSITION MEDITATION CENTER

#### **ALL VETERANS WANTED!**

All veterans are welcome regardless of discharge status, gender, ethnicity, Two-Spirited, and LGBTQIA+

#### For Veterans By Veterans



#### NO FEE !! EVERY VETERAN FULLY FUNDED!

There is no cost to the Veteran, transportation to and from The Clyde and all accommodations are paid for from generous donations and grants.



#### **DETAILS TO APPLY**

Go to the website and email or download the application to participate in the Veterans Meditation Retreat.



#### **PLANNING YOUR TRIP**





SCAN FOR RETREAT APPLICATION

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT US

### VETERAN MEDITATION RETREAT

NEDITATION RAISE AND REAL PROPERTY.

WHEN: October 13-16

WHERE: The Clyde Hotel in Albuquerque, NM

WHY: To introduce Meditation healing tools



**Phone Number** 505-982-4183

Email Address info@lifetransition.com

Website lifetransition.com



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Veterans Benefits & Health Fair October 21, 2023 9AM – 3PM

#### Receive assistance with filing for or information about:

VA Health Care Benefits, VA Health Care for Women Veterans, VA Disability Compensation and Pension, Death Benefits, Veteran Cemetery Burials, GI Education Benefits, Employment Assistance, State Benefits and much more.

#### Bring your DD-214 and all supporting documents!

The American Legion
Dean Lucas Post 25
2400 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street - Clovis, NM 88101

Questions contact Dale Movius 505-273-0086











## WNMU REMEMBRANCE MARCH III HOSTS



Where: Juan Chacon Parking Lot

When: 21 October 2023

Time: 8:00 AM Registration, 10:00 AM Start

Deadline: 6 October 2023

Cost: \$20 Registration made payable to WNMU Foundation-Veteran Resource Fund A 1 Mile Honor March around the beautiful WNMU Campus if unable to make the Boston Hill Trail

See Reverse for Map

Presentation of plaques for Honored Veterans.

FREE Food and Drinks!!

Contact: WNMU Veterans Affairs Manager Sylvia Sierra for more information at (575)-538-6871 or (575)-654-5413 Or contact Liz Lopez at (575)-574-2964

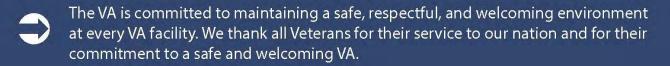


# Calling All Veterans Bystander Intervention Training



#### Learn what to do if you witness harassment or sexual assault

- Help to keep VA environments safe and welcoming. Learn how to recognize and respond to harassment or sexual assault.
- Go to <a href="https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/bystandertraining">www.veterantraining.va.gov/bystandertraining</a> or scan the QR code. Be sure to get your certificate of completion.







# News from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

## PACT Act Deadline Extended for Many Post-9/11 Combat Zone Veterans

Veterans who deployed to a combat zone, never enrolled in VA health care, and left the military between Sept. 11, 2001, and Oct. 1, 2013, are eligible to enroll directly in VA health care through the PACT Act. This special enrollment period gives veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan and other combat zones an opportunity to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for disability compensation benefits. But the deadline to take



'advantage of this expires at 9:59 p.m. Mountain Time on Sept. 30,

This special enrollment period is a part of the PACT Act, the largest expansion of VA health care and benefits in generations. Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law Aug. 10, 2022, more than 344,000 veterans have enrolled in VA health care, and more than 4.2 million enrolled veterans have been screened for toxic exposures.

"Are you a veteran who deployed to a combat zone but never enrolled in VA health care? You should sign up now. Even if you don't need this care now, you may need it in the future, and once you're in, you have access for life. But don't wait – the deadline is Sept. 30 – so go to <u>VA.gov/PACT</u> and apply today," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough.

Although this deadline is written into law for this specific group of veterans, many other groups of veterans are able to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for other VA benefits—including many Vietnam War veterans, Gulf War veterans, veterans who deployed to a combat zone and transitioned out of the service less than 10 years ago, and more. Veterans who do not meet any of the above criteria can often still access VA health care by filing for VA disability compensation benefits or based on income. If a veteran is granted service connection for any health condition, they become eligible for VA care. The PACT Act also expanded VA disability compensation benefits for millions of veterans, making more than 300 health conditions "presumptive" for service connection. This means that if an eligible veteran has one of these health conditions and served in the applicable place during an applicable time, VA automatically assumes that the condition was caused by the veteran's service and provides compensation and care accordingly.

If you would like help filing a PACT Act claim, please visit or contact any DVS veterans' service office listed on the back two pages of this newsletter.





#### **DVS Field Offices in New Mexico**

DVS has field offices throughout the state that are staffed with nationally accredited veterans service officers. DVS VSOs are dedicated to helping veterans with filing VA claims, applying for state veterans benefits, or with helping with anything else a veteran or their family needs with.

Office hours are Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm, (excluding holidays). Though this service is free, appointments are required and can be

made by contacting the VSOs below. Please note: VSOs can also provide help by phone or email to any veteran or eligible dependent—regardless of their location.

#### Alamogordo/Southeast NM

#### **David Henley**

411 10th Street #107 (575) 937-5620

david.henley@dvs.nm.gov

#### Albuquerque Metro Area

Carlsbad/Southeast NM

**Dagmar Youngberg** 

101 N. Halagueno (575) 988-5900

#### **Ron Saavedra**

Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2 4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr (505) 383-2400

ronald.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov

#### **Albuquerque Metro Area**

May Chavez (ABQ metro supervisor) Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2 4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr (505) 383-2400

helen.chavez@dvs.nm.gov

#### **Albuquerque Metro Area**

#### **Daisie Couch**

Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2 4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr (505) 383-2400

daisie.couch@dvs.nm.gov

#### **Clovis/Southeast NM**

Matt Barela (SE region supervisor) 904 W. Sixth St.

(575) 825-9602

<u>dagmar.youngberg@dvs.nm.gov</u> <u>matthew.barela@dvs.nm.gov</u>

#### Farmington/Northwest NM

Robert Guinn (region supervisor) Candice Pioche-Zunie

San Juan College Vet Center/ Room 1715-B

(505) 327-2861

robert.guinn@dvs.nm.gov

#### Farmington/Northwest NM

San Juan College Vet Center Room 1715-B (505) 916-4835

candice.pioche@dvs.nm.gov

(more offices are on the next page)

#### Albuquerque Metro Area

#### **Austin Walker**

Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2 4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr (505) 383-2400

hope.najera@dvs.nm.gov

#### Belen/ABQ Metro & Central NM

#### **Rob Miller**

Belen Business Center 719 South Main. St. (505) 537-9339

rob.miller@dvs.nm.gov

#### **Clovis/Southeast NM**

Ben Padilla

904 W. Sixth St. (505) 537-1445

ben.padilla@dvs.nm.gov

#### Gallup/Northwest NM

#### John Livingston

908 E. Buena Vista Ave/Room 1A (505) 389-8731

john.livingston@dvs.nm.gov

#### **Grants/Northwest NM**

**April Ball** 

551 Washington Ave.

(505) 521-8132

april.ball@dvs.nm.gov

#### **Hobbs/Southeast NM**

Fred Solis-Littlejohn

2120 North Alto St.

(575) 241-0714

fred.solis-little@dvs.nm.gov

#### Las Cruces/Southwest NM

**Miguel Martinez** (supervisor)

2024 E. Griggs Ave. (505) 216-8782

miguel.martinez@dvs.nm.gov

#### Las Cruces/Southwest NM

Vincent Tellez

2024 E. Griggs Ave.

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vincent.tellez@dvs.nm.gov

#### Las Cruces/Southwest NM

**Clint Anderson** 

2024 E. Griggs Ave.

(505) 216-8782

clint.anderson@dvs.nm.gov

#### Las Vegas, NM/Northeast NM

**Arturo Marlow** (supervisor)

917 Douglas Ave.

(505) 331-8838

<u>arturo.marlow@</u>dvs.nm.gov

#### Las Vegas/Northeast NM

Jimmy Saiz

917 Douglas Ave.

(505) TBD

jimmy.saiz@dvs.nm.gov

#### Rio Rancho/Northwest NM

**Dustin Newsom** 

Sandoval County Admin. Bldg. 1500 Idalia Rd./Bldg. D, Room 2041 (575) 416-2284

(505) 221-7190

dustin.newsom@dvs.nm.gov

#### Roswell/Southeast NM

**Danielle Thompson** 

1600 SE Main Street /Suite 2A

danielle.thompson@dvs.nm.gov

#### Santa Fe/Northwest NM

Nick McKenzie

Bataan Memorial Bldg. 1st Floor/ Western New Mexico University

Room 134/407 Galisteo St

(505) 218-3125

nicholas.mckenzie@dvs.nm.gov

#### Silver City/Southwest NM

Clarissa Sierra

Juan Chacon Bldg./Rm. 138A

1000 West College Ave.

(575) 313-5627

clarissa.sierra@dvs.nm.gov

**Pueblos/Tribal Liaison** 

#### Taos/Northwest NM

Leticia "Lety" Cano

Health & Human Service Bldg.

145 Roy Rd.

(505) 709-5263

leticia.cano@dvs.nm.gov

#### **Women Veterans Program**

#### Theresa Figueroa

Pinetree Business Park 4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor 4601 College Blvd./Room 1715-B

(505) 372-9106

theresa.figueroa@dvs.nm.gov

**Beverly Charley** 

San Juan College Veterans Center

(575) 241-3322

beverly.charley@dvs.nm.gov