



The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

www.nmdvs.org

1-(866) 433-8387 toll-free

October, 2020

DVS Secretary Judy Griego Retires; Sonya Smith Named New DVS Secretary



Sonya Smith
*New DVS
Secretary*

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) would like to introduce Sonya L. Smith, a veteran and health care professional, as the agency's new secretary. Smith succeeds Ret. Brig. Gen. Judy Griego, who has retired from state service.

Secretary Smith most recently worked at the New Mexico Department of Health as a special projects coordinator, specifically helping guide the efforts of the agency's COVID-19 testing team. Prior to that, she served as director of compliance and primary care programs at Southwest Care Center in Santa Fe, and before that she worked as the clinical compliance manager at the University of New Mexico Truman Health Services clinic.

A veteran of the Gulf War, Smith, 54, served as a medical technician in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. A member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve, she received an honorable discharge. She earned a bachelor's degree in health services management from Norfolk State University in Norfolk, VA.

"I am committed to investing in essential programs and resources and outreach for New Mexico's veterans and delivering on their needs -- and the needs of their families -- every single day," Smith said. "New Mexico's veterans have given everything for our state and for our country. The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services is here to honor them, to help them and above all to serve those who served us."

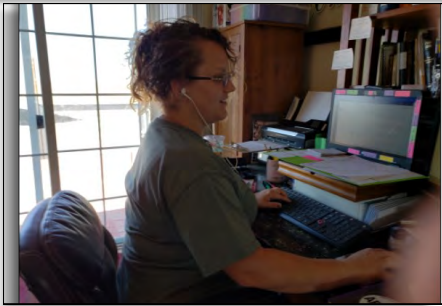
Retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Judy Griego retired from the military in 2016 after a 36-year career, her most recent post prior to state government being the chief of staff of the New Mexico Air National Guard. She agreed to suspend her retirement in late 2018 to serve in Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's cabinet with the intention of re-entering retirement after serving a year at the helm of DVS.

"I want to thank Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham for the honor of serving in her administration for these past 21 months," said former Secretary Griego. "DVS has a staff of truly excellent people that I was proud to serve with. I know Secretary Smith will do more great things to grow DVS and further help New Mexico's veterans and their families."



Judy M. Griego
Retires as DVS Secretary

DVS to Continue With Telework Operations



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) will continue to conduct business and offer public assistance by mail, telephone, email, or video conferencing. DVS, as with all state agencies, will be offering this telework remote assistance until the New Mexico Department of Health deems it safe for state offices to reopen to the public.

Veterans and unmarried surviving spouses of deceased veterans needing help with filing for or updating their VA or state veterans benefits can contact any DVS Veterans Service Officer (VSO) listed below on the VSO's mobile phone, leaving messages on the VSO's office phone, real-time video conferencing, or e-mail. Assistance is provided on a first-call, first-served basis. "Real time" video conferencing can also be arranged by contacting the VSO.

Data from the state Department of Health data shows the COVID-19 continues to spread throughout New Mexico (*more New Mexico COVID-19 data on page 5*)—and in neighboring Arizona, Colorado, Utah,

Alamogordo (VSO: Larry Weatherwax)

Office: (575) 437-4635

Mobile: (575) 491-3127

larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us

Albuquerque #1 (Karen Abeyta)

Office: (505) 346-3986

Mobile: (505) 429-0856

karen.abeyta@state.nm.us

Albuquerque #2 (Gordon Schei)

Office: (505) 346-4810

Mobile: *(same as office number)*

Gordon.schei@state.nm.us

Albuquerque #3 (Victoria Bader)

Mobile: (505) 225-5253

Victoria.bader@state.nm.us

Albuquerque #4 (Johnny Martinez)

Mobile: (505) 274-3609

johnW.martinez2@state.nm.us

Carlsbad (Dagmar Youngberg)

Office: (575) 885-4939

Mobile: (575) 988-5900

Dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us

Clovis (Matt Barela)

Office: (575) 762-6185

Mobile: (575) 825-9602

Matthew.barela@state.nm.us

Farmington (Beverly Charley)

Office: (505) 327-2861

Mobile: *(same as office number)*

Beverly.charley@state.nm.us

Gallup (Durrell Tsosie)

Mobile: (505) 218-0348

Durrell.Tsosie@state.nm.us

(Hobbs (Dalton Boyd)

Office: (575) 397-5290

Mobile: (575) 241-0714

(continued)

Las Cruces #1 (George Vargas)

Office: (575) 524-6124

Mobile: (575) 520-2634

George.vargas@state.nm.us**Las Cruces #2 (Rosa Bycenski)**

Office: (575) 524-6220

Mobile: (505) 870-1349

Rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us**Las Cruces #3 (Craig Chumley)**

Office: (575) 524-6220

Mobile: (same as office number)

Craig.chumley@state.nm.us**Las Vegas, NM #1 (Martín Márquez)**

Office: (505) 454-0068

Mobile: (575) 520-5079

MartínM.marquez@state.nm.us**Las Vegas, NM #2 (Arturo Marlow)**

Mobile: (505) 331-8838

Arturo.marlow@state.nm.us**Roswell (Danielle Thompson)**

Office: (575) 624-6086

Mobile: (575) 416-2284

Danielle.thompson@state.nm.us**Santa Fe (Dustin Newsom)**

Mobile: (505) 221-7190

Dustin.newsom@state.nm.us

For VA benefits, veterans can get more information or self-file online at www.ebenefits.va.gov

Help for Veteran-Owned Businesses

Veterans who own their own business can contact the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) for information about emergency assistance programs for small businesses affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Rich Coffel**VBOC Director**

(505) 383-2401

RichardL.coffel@state.nm.us**Jim Cassidy (based in SE/southern NM)****VBOC Veterans Business Advisor**

(575) 624-6002

JamesM.cassidy@state.nm.us

Ft. Stanton, Gallup, and Angel Fire State Veterans Cemeteries; Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full funerals and the rendering of military funeral honors are still downsized until further notice at the DVS-managed Ft. Stanton, Gallup, and Angel Fire State Veterans Cemeteries. Gatherings will continue to be limited to ten individuals, per National Cemetery Association regulations. Attendees are required to wear masks, and observe six-foot social distancing spacing. Burials and interments are performed by DVS staff wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). Once full post-pandemic operations resume, families can schedule full-service interments by contacting the following DVS cemetery supervisors:

Ft. Stanton

Gilbert Lopez

(505) 383-4381

david.flores@state.nm.us**Gallup State**

David Flores

(575) 921-3494

gilbert.lopez@state.nm.us**Angel Fire**

Randy Myklebust

(505) 225-4342

randal.myklebust@state.nm.us

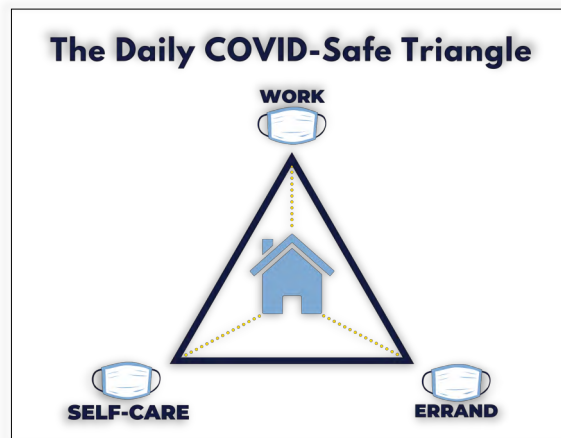
The Memorial Chapel at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire remains open to the public. Masks are required, and social distancing spacing will be monitored by PPE-wearing DVS staff. However, the remainder of the Memorial grounds remains closed to the public.

Governor Lujan Grisham Encourages New Mexicans to “Stay Inside the Triangle”

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and state health officials are reminding New Mexicans to limit their travel outside of the home in order to reduce the risk of spreading the virus, which has spread in recent months (*see next page for the latest statewide COVID-1 data*)

“Every time we leave the house, we take a risk, because the virus is out there, and it is an awful, invisible enemy,” said the Governor at a news briefing on October 8. “But if and when we must go out, we should think about how to minimize the number of places we visit, the things we do, the people we come into contact with. If we limit ourselves to three trips or places to go or things to do each day – or fewer! – we will ultimately reduce the opportunities for catching and spreading the virus. And it will make an enormous difference in our state’s overall health and well-being and permit us to get more students safely back in the classroom and more New Mexicans safely back to work.”

New Mexicans are encouraged to think about categorizing their limited daily travel outside the home into the following categories:



COVID-safe self-care options can include going for a solo walk or a run, walking the dog, visiting a park, taking a hike alone or with a small group -- all while practicing social distancing from others and wearing a facemask.

The following public health restrictions and guidelines remain in place:

- Masks are required in all public settings in New Mexico for the benefit of public health.
- Gatherings of more than 10 are not permitted.

A period of self-quarantine is mandatory for visitors and New Mexicans returning from out-of-state from most U.S. states. A period of self-quarantine is mandatory for visitors and New Mexicans arriving from several U.S. states: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/travel-recommendations/>

“There’s a safer option, and a less-safe option, for everything we do outside of the home,” said Human Services Secretary David Scrase, M.D. “I hope all New Mexicans choose the safer option: Takeout or delivery instead of dining in, ordering online instead of browsing through the aisles of a store, visiting a family member or friend over the phone or the computer instead of spending time indoors and in person, going for a jog alone with a mask instead of hiking with a large group of friends.”

Dr. Scrase added, “Of course, staying home in the first place is always the safest choice. If more of us make these choices, the safer decisions, we will see fewer illnesses in our state, and we will begin to once again turn the tide in our fight against this virus.”

Latest COVID-19 Data *(as of Thursday, Oct. 22)*

County	Major City/Town	Cases	Deaths
Bernalillo	Albuquerque	9,685	189
Doña Ana	Las Cruces	5,170	65
McKinley	Gallup	4,509	261
San Juan	Farmington	3,674	203
Lea	Hobbs	1,928	28
Chaves	Roswell	1,846	18
Sandoval	Rio Rancho	1,825	44
Santa Fe	Santa Fe	1,491	14
Curry	Clovis	1,397	10
Eddy	Carlsbad	1,302	20
Valencia	Los Lunas	833	4
Luna	Deming	685	11
Cibola	Grants	532	21
Rio Arriba	Española	464	15
Otero	Alamogordo	418	13
Roosevelt	Portales	418	7
Lincoln	Ruidoso	336	4
Socorro	Socorro	197	8
Taos	Taos	182	4
Grant	Silver City	172	3
San Miguel	Las Vegas	152	0
Hidalgo	Lordsburg	112	2
Quay	Tucumcari	95	2
Torrance	Moriarty	94	1
Sierra	Truth or Consequences	89	1
Colfax	Raton	42	1
Los Alamos	Los Alamos	40	0
Guadalupe	Santa Rosa	39	1
Union	Clayton	39	2
Mora	Mora	14	0
Catron	Quemado	9	1
De Baca	Ft. Sumner	1	0
Harding	Mosquero	1	0
Counties Total		37,791	953

Correctional Facilities			
County	(Privately Managed) [Contracted w/ICE]		Deaths
Otero	Otero County Prison Facility	342	[1]
Cibola	Cibola County Correctional Center	340	
Otero	Otero County Processing Center	181	
Torrance	Torrance County Detention Facility	44	
State/County Facilities			
Otero	Otero County Prison Facility	472	[3]
Lea	Lea County Correctional Facility	106	
Dofia Ana	Southern NM Correctional Facility	46	
Valencia	Central NM Correctional Facility	44	
Union	NE New Mexico Correctional Facility	5	
Cibola	Western NM Correctional Facility	4	
Cibola	NW New Mexico Correctional Center	1	
Santa Fe	State Penitentiary of New Mexico	1	
<i>[Prison/Jail Inmate Total]</i>		<i>[1,586]</i>	<i>[4]</i>
TOTAL IN NM		39,377	953

Number of New Mexicans Tested: 1,089,150

Deaths 953

Hospitalized (currently) 213

Hospitalized (to date) 4,128

Recovered 20,562

Deaths (by Age Group)

<19	1
20's	8
30's	52
40's	45
50's	109
60's	164
70's	223
80's	229
90's	116
100's	6
Total	953



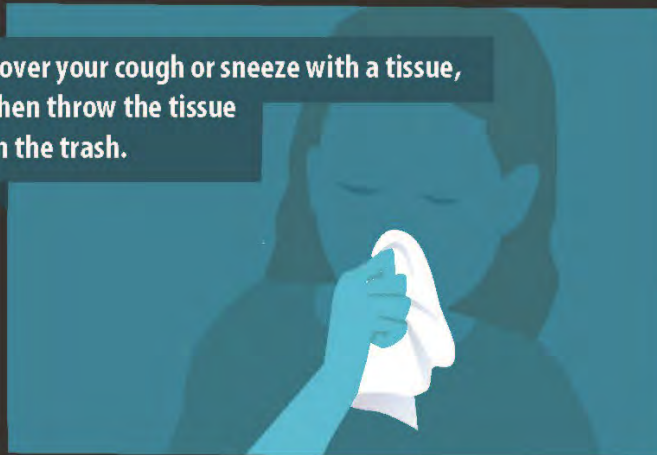
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

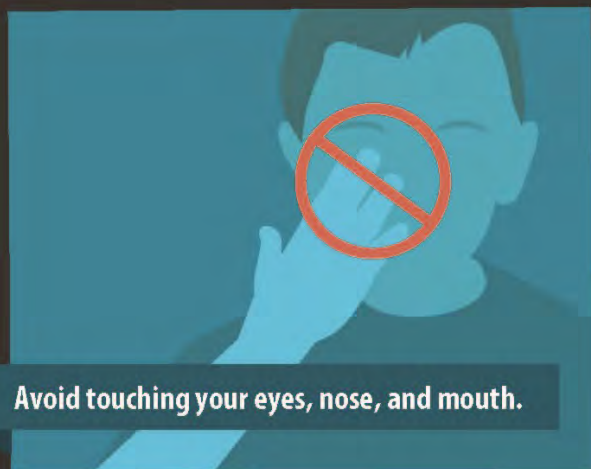
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

For more information: cv.nmhealth.org

29 Unclaimed Deceased Veterans Laid to Rest in the 2020 Forgotten Heroes Funeral



The cremated remains of twenty-nine military veterans who, upon their deaths were unclaimed by family members, were laid to rest with military honors today at the Santa Fe National Cemetery in a special 2020 Forgotten Heroes Funeral.

Due to COVID-19 protective health measures, the funeral was a private event attended by New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Secretary Judy Griego, New Mexico Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Ken Nava, Santa Fe National Cemetery Interim Director Jennifer Deherty, and a handful of staff members from DVS and Daniels Family Funeral Services of Albuquerque—all of whom were wearing protective

masks and observed social distancing.

Governor Michele Lujan Grisham delivered a videotaped eulogy, praising the fallen veterans for their military service to our country.

“We are forced to host this ceremony virtually, but that should not diminish our effort to provide these veterans the ‘final salute’ they earned through their service to our country,” said the Governor. “This may be called the *Forgotten Heroes Funeral*, but these heroes, today, are not forgotten. May the souls of these 29 men rest now and forever in peace.” *(the eulogy...as well as an 11-minute video recap of the funeral, can be seen on the following DVS Youtube channel link:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6o9t68itxYY&pbjreload=101>



Of the 29 veterans—all of them male—25 were from Bernalillo County, and four from Otero County. They were provided the formal military funeral through the Forgotten Heroes Burial Program. This collaborative effort between the state and all thirty-three counties in New Mexico ensures that any honorably discharged deceased veteran whose body goes unclaimed by family members receives a military funeral at the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

The program was created in 2009 through an initial collaboration with Bernalillo County, which sought assistance to help lay to rest the cremated remains of its unclaimed deceased veterans. It was the first

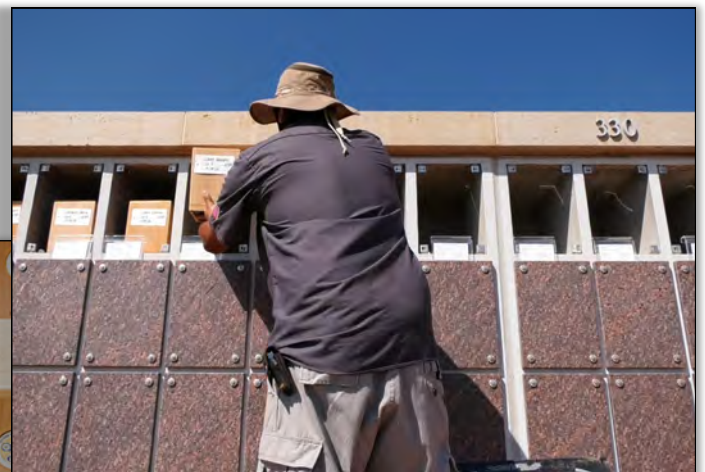
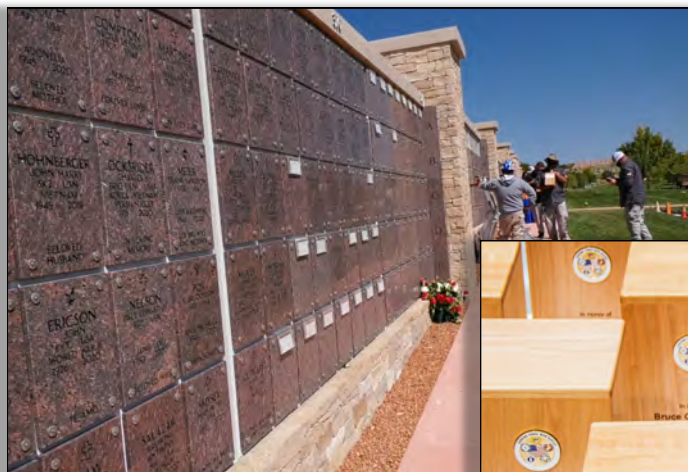
state-led collaborative effort in the nation to ensure that unclaimed deceased honorably discharged veterans receive a military funeral. The interment service featured a flag-fold ceremony and 21-Rifle Volley performed by the American Legion Post 12/Santa Fe Honor Guard. Adjutant General Nava presented the folded American Flag used in the service to DVS Secretary Griego, who accepted it on behalf of the Governor and the citizens of New Mexico. *(continued)*

Interred with full military honors were the following 25 veterans from Bernalillo County:

USAF Pvt. Adrian San Jose Christian Aarons (Date of death: 5/23/19)
 U.S. Army (rank undetermined) Lionel Eugene Austin (12/31/18)
 USAF A1C Robert Bell (8/23/18)
 U.S Navy SA John D. Brant (12/31/17)
 Army SP4 Dobbins D. Brown (8/10/18)
 U.S. Coast Guard PO1 Richard Lee Bryson (1/31/18)
 Army (rank undetermined) Jimmy Edward Chavez (2/25/18)
 Army (rank undetermined) Fredrick Finfrook (3/19/19)
 USAF MSgt. Arnold Alvin Fischer (9/14/18)
 Army (rank undetermined) Horatio C. Flores (9/10/18)
 USMC (rank undetermined) Bruce Charles Fox (2/1/19)
 Navy (rank undetermined) Gregory Ayala Garcia (5/14/18)
 Coast Guard PO3 Hugh Kenneth Gilmour (9/4/18)
 Navy (rank undetermined) Fred Louis Hernandez (10/24/18)
 USMC (rank undetermined) Perry Lee Hiner (6/11/18)
 Army PFC Rafael Jesus Hinojosa (12/29/18)
 USAF (rank undetermined) Jimmy Wayne Mattison (5/4/18)
 Army PFC Gary W. Moore (7/16/18)
 Army PFC Carlos Pinkston (4/30/18)
 Navy SA Larry Wayne Reckard (7/3/18)
 Army (rank undetermined) Don Anthony Saavedra (12/31/18)
 USAF (rank undetermined) Herdia Luke Shell (9/25/18)
 Army SP4 Darryl Howard Shrader (6/15/18)
 USAF SSgt James Arthur Stevens (3/11/19)
 USAF (rank undetermined) Hugh Godwin Vann II (9/22/18)

Interred from Otero County:

USMC Cpl Earl Brubaker (3/27/17)
 Navy P3 Elbert Stocks (3/13/18)
 Army PVT Richard Wolfe (6/12/18)
 USAF TSgt Buddy Milford (3/6/17)



Former New Mexico Adjutant General Edward Baca Passes Away



Lt. Gen. Edward D. Baca
(U.S. Army-retired)

Former Adjutant General of New Mexico D. Baca passed away on September 15 after a long battle with leukemia. He was 82-years old, and was surrounded by family at his Albuquerque home.

Lt. Gen. Baca was buried on September 18, in the city of his birth, at the Santa Fe National Cemetery. The full-military-honors funeral featured Guards of Honor, cannon fire, a rifle team volley, and a horse-drawn caisson featuring a caparisoned riderless horse following the procession. Current New Mexico Adjutant General Ken Nava presented the folded lag which draped the casket to Lt. Gen. Baca's widow Rita. The presentation was followed with a bugle rendition of *Taps*, a bag pipe rendition of *Amazing Grace*—and a flyover by two F-16 Falcon aircraft.

In addition to Rita, his wife of 62-years, Lt. Gen. Baca is survived by 6 children, 23 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, and his brothers Sam and Bob.

Appointment as Adjutant General of New Mexico

Lt. Gen. Baca's distinguished Army career spanned 41-years, which included an appointment as Adjutant General of New Mexico—the state's highest ranking administrative military officer--by Governor Toney Anaya on January 4, 1983.

Lt. Gen. Baca's leadership and vision were instrumental in modernizing the New Mexico National Guard to include the deployment in New Mexico of the Army's only Roland Air Defense battalion, as well as the fielding of Chaparral, Hawk and Patriot missile battalions.

He also initiated the Guard's Drug Demand Reduction Program to assist law enforcement agencies to fight the war on drugs and help prevent children from using drugs. The effectiveness of the program was praised by the National Guard Bureau and was used as a pilot program for several other states.

Lt. Gen. Baca also made it a priority to recognize WWII Bataan Peninsula veterans, and the telling of their story of their courageous service in the Philippines. He made a promise—which continues today--that those who served with the New Mexico National Guard's 200th and 515th Coast Artillery Units in defense against Japan would be honored every year on April 9-- the date in 1942 when the two units and 75,000 other U.S. and Filipino forces were ordered to surrender by U.S. command.

Appointment as Chief of the National Guard Bureau

On October 1, 1994, President Bill Clinton appointed Lt. Gen. Baca as the Chief of the National Guard Bureau—the highest-ranking officer of the United States National Guard. In his new post, Lt. Gen. Baca oversaw approximately 500,000 Guard members in almost 3,000 communities nationwide. He managed an annual budget of over \$9 Billion, and was the custodian and accountable officer for more than \$100 billion in facilities and equipment.

Under Lt. Gen. Baca's leadership, National Guard troops were deployed to geopolitical "hot spots" in Europe, Latin America, Southeast Asia, Russia, and former Soviet Eastern Bloc nations. The National Guard also earned a reputation for excellence in community-related activities to include extensive involvement in counter-drug and drug demand reduction activities and Youth-at-Risk Programs.

DVS Participates in Virtual Chaves County Wellness Fair



DVS was one of several agencies that participated in the 2nd Annual Chaves County Health Expo on September 12—which this year was a virtual/online event on the social media platform Facebook.

The event was designed to encourage healthy lifestyles, prevent and manage diseases and illnesses--while connecting Chaves County residents to valuable resources that they can view at their own pace.

DVS contributed a 9-minute video explaining how the agency can help the more than 12,000 veterans and

their families in SE New Mexico and throughout the state with filing for the VA health benefits, as well as other VA and state veterans' benefits.

DVS VSO's Participate Online For This Year's Annual Training Conference

DVS Veterans Service Officers (VSO's)—the staff members at the agency who directly assist veterans and eligible dependents of veterans with their VA or state veterans benefits needs—participated via video conference in the agency's annual VSO training conference from September 16-18.

All seventeen VSO's, who have been providing telework benefits assistance from their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic, were joined by Native American VSO's to get updates on VA benefits and procedures from New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Andrew Welch and Albuquerque VA Regional Office Director Sammy Quillin.



Emphasis this year was on creating a Fully Developed Claims (FDC), Benefit Delivery upon Discharge (BDD), the appeals process, and the VetraSpec electronic claims management software system adopted by DVS last year which greatly improved electronic claims submittals directly to the VA. The VSO's were also briefed on DVS policy and procedure updates by DVS Legal Counsel Gabrielle Sanchez-Sandoval and DVS Chief IT Officer Terry Rickard.

DVS presents this annual conference to ensure that its VSO's maintain their accreditation as certified VSO's. Last year, DVS invited a dozen Native American VSO's to gain accreditation in order to help the agency improve its outreach to veterans living in the 19 pueblos, and Navajo, Jicarilla, Mescalero nation tribal land within the state.

UNM Waives Graduate Studies Fees for Veterans & Active-Duty Military Personnel



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW MEXICO

The University of New Mexico (UNM) UNM Graduate Studies Program has announced a new initiative that waives fees for active military personnel and veterans on applications to graduate school.

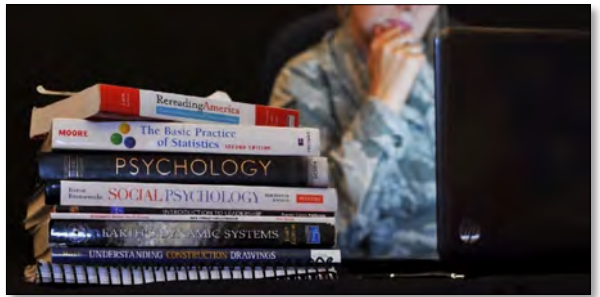
The cost to submit an application to a graduate program at UNM is \$50, excluding any other fees an individual department or program might add on, but Graduate Studies is now extending fee waiver requests to active military personnel and qualifying veterans to waive the cost of general application fee.

“Veterans bring a unique perspective to our classrooms and research areas,” said UNM Dean of Graduate Studies Julie Coonrod. “We believe that they will be enriched by our graduate programs while contributing ideas based on their distinctive experiences.”

However, a fee waiver is not automatic.

“Active duty applicants must fill out the fee waiver request form, along with other required documentation, including a copy of their valid military ID, copy of orders, or a memo from their unit commander on official letterhead,” said ,” explained Robben Brown, academic affairs specialist in Graduate Studies. “Veterans must fill out the form and submit it with a copy of their DD214.”

In either case, the form and supporting documentation must be sent to Graduate Studies, and Brown suggested sending everything at least four weeks before the posted application deadline of the graduate program to which the student is applying.



Military personnel and veterans are not the only ones who can request a fee waiver. Applicants who are affiliated with select programs, such as the GEM Fellowship, McNair Scholars, Mellon-Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, the Minority Access to Research Careers, or the Post Baccalaureate Research and Education Program are also eligible to apply for a fee waiver, and in limited cases, waivers can be granted to applicants who can demonstrate financial hardship.

Waivers do not cover other fees that departments or programs may require.

“Graduate Studies is deeply committed to making graduate education accessible and attainable to our populations, and we are especially grateful for our students who have served our country.

For more information about Graduate Studies and specific details about the fee waiver request, go to the Graduate Studies website at <https://grad.unm.edu/resources/gs-forms/application-fee-waiver.html>.



Garrison Flag Raised at on Patriot Day at Veterans Memorial Park in Las Cruces



FROM T to R: *Former DVS Veterans Service Officer JR Turner, Fred Armijo, Las Cruces Fire Chief Eric Enriques, and Interim Las Cruces Police Chief Miguel Dominguez were among the group of volunteers who raised the city's Garrison Flag. It was then lowered that evening.*

Spangled Banner, the lyrics which refer to the *broad stripes and bright stars...thru the perilous fight... the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air* that Mr. Key had witnessed.

A large Garrison Flag was raised on September 11 at Veterans Memorial Park in Las Cruces in observance of Patriot Day.

The city's 12'x20' American flag was raised on the park's 80-foot flag pole to commemorate the day observed every year since 2002. That year, Congress proclaimed Patriot Day as a national day of mourning for the nearly 3,000 people who, a year earlier on this date, lost their lives in the 9/11 terrorist hijacking and crashes of four commercial aircraft.

Garrison Flags trace their beginnings to the War of 1812, when American forces endured heavy British bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, MD, in September 13. An oversized American flag was raised to commemorate the victory the next morning.

American lawyer Francis Scott Key, who had been detained aboard a British ship and had a front-row seat to the overnight attack, was inspired to write a poem *The Defence of Fort McHenry*. This was soon set to music and eventually became our national anthem *The Star*

VIC to Present Operation Onward Support

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers (VIC) has cancelled this year's *Operation Stand Down & Hand Up*—the annual “stand down” to assist homeless and near-homeless veterans. It was scheduled for October 23.

Instead, the effort will continue in another form—with *Operation Onward Support*. VIC staff will be deployed throughout the Albuquerque metro via mobile outreach teams to provide critically needed items including food, socks, and cold weather gear. Emergency housing will be immediately provided to any veteran willing to accept services by the VIC or other service providers. Referrals to other resources will also be provided for those needing additional assistance.

The VIC and agencies like DVS which annually support the stand down look forward to presenting a “normal” stand down next year.



Free Food Pantry Oct. 24 For Albuquerque Residents

Food Resource

In an attempt to counter some of those rising costs, Kennedy Mid School in the NE Heights has been having a 'Food Pantry' event once a month. There is no "qualification", no income threshold, no registration necessary. You don't even need school aged children in your family. The goal is to get good quality food into the hands of families just to help out a bit.

A couple of months ago there was 2.5 tons of food distributed and about 3+ tons distributed last month. I was informed that they are anticipating 4.5 tons of food to be delivered for distribution this **Saturday, October 24th. This is high quality food. This Saturday there is supposed to be frozen chickens, fresh vegetables, fresh dairy and the usual canned and dried staples. The boxes may even contain dessert items.**

The distribution is scheduled to start by 9:00 a.m. and will take place at Kennedy Mid School located at 721 Tomasita St. NE, Albuquerque, 87123. Tomasita St. is the first light west of Juan Tabo on Lomas Blvd and Kennedy is located south of Lomas on Tomasita.

For those of us trying to control the spread of the Coronavirus, the people who are receiving the food pull into the drop off lot in the front of the school and stay in their car. A worker, wearing a mask (like we're all supposed to) comes to the car window and takes some very basic demographic information and asks how many families food is being provided for. Then eager volunteers with sore backs load the food in your trunk and you're on your way!

Have a great day and y thank you again for all the hard work you all do each and every day in the service to our Veterans!

Navy Week to be Commemorated in Santa Fe With an Online Small Business Workshop



New Mexico's small business community is invited to attend a virtual workshop hosted by the Department of the Navy (DON) Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP). This event is being held in partnership with the Navy Office of Community Outreach (NAVCO) as part of the Santa Fe, New Mexico Virtual Navy Week November 2-8.

EVENT NAME: *Doing Business with the Department of the Navy Virtual Small Business Workshop*

SPEAKER: Ms. Arveice Washington, Deputy Director, Department of the Navy Office of Small Business Programs

DATE: Wednesday, November 4

TIME: 12pm/Noon

Space is limited and reservations are required to attend this free event. Businesses can register online: https://navy-osbp.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_Ah9Vg1tmQnuuBGVBXOFCpg

These workshops are designed to educate small businesses on the DON vision and mission, and DON OSBP's strategic initiatives, programs and contracting opportunities. DON OSBP prides itself on providing the highest quality of resources and information to assist small businesses and help ensure their procurement readiness status.

"DON OSBP is dedicated to helping small business owners, and our workshops provide unique opportunities for us to engage directly with the small business community and provide them with information to navigate federal procurement processes and contribute most effectively to the DON mission," said Ms. Washington. "We help people understand who buys what within DON Commands and also provide information on upcoming prime contracting and subcontracting opportunities."

Government contracts provide great opportunities for small businesses. The latest FY20 Small Business Awards data (non-validated) for small businesses headquartered within 100 miles of Santa Fe, NM indicates the following:

- Overall Awards: \$31.74M
- Small Business Awards: \$31.54M

Local businesses in New Mexico that the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps have partnered with include Westwind Computer Products, Senspex Incorporated, Abba Technologies, Voc Optima and Thunder Scientific Corporation.

Selected as one of eight cities to host the week-long celebration, the United States Navy will be at the center of the greater Santa Fe and New Mexico community for Navy Week November 2 through 8, 2020. For the first time, the Navy Week will bring Sailors from all across the United States to the city virtually. New Mexico has hosted three previous Navy Weeks: 2009, 2016 and 2018.

Since 2005, the Navy Week program has served as the Navy's principal outreach effort into areas of the country without a significant Navy presence, with 210 Navy Weeks held in 74 U.S. cities. The program is designed to educate and help Americans understand that their Navy is deployed around the world, around the clock, ready to defend America at all times.

Two New Mexico Service Agencies Among 119 Recipients of \$15 Million in VA Grants



**VA Secretary
Robert Wilkie**

**For more news and
benefits information
from the VA, visit
www.va.gov**

**The VA has a regional
office in Albuquerque.
For more Information:
[www.benefits.va.gov/
albuquerque](http://www.benefits.va.gov/albuquerque)**

**For information about the
New Mexico VA
Health Care System:
www.albuquerque.va.gov**

Adaptive Sports Program New Mexico in Santa Fe and *Not Forgotten Outreach, Inc.* in Taos are among two of 119 service organizations in the nation which will receive funding from nearly \$15 million in U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adaptive sports grants,

Programs funded through these grants offer adaptive sports and activities to more than 13,000 veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities. Included are Paralympic sports such as archery, cycling and skiing. Additional outdoor sporting activities are hunting, rock climbing and sky diving. Of the total, \$1.5 million is also being used to support organizations that offer equine-assisted therapy to support mental health.

“Adaptive sports empower veterans to overcome daily challenges and live without limits,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “This is made possible by partnering with over 100 community organizations dedicated to providing adaptive sports and activities to encourage veterans along their health and wellness journey.”

Grant recipients may use the funds for planning, developing, managing and implementing adaptive sports programs. The VA will award the grants to national governing bodies, which prepare high-level athletes for Paralympic competition; Veterans Service Organizations; city and regional municipalities; and other community groups to provide a wide range of adaptive sports opportunities

More information about the program are available at
<https://www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse/grant-program/>

Adaptive Sports Program New Mexico

Adaptive Sports Program New Mexico offers therapeutic recreational activities to children and adults with disabilities. ASPNM proudly offers a wide variety of adaptive sports year round, including skiing, snowboarding, watersports, river rafting, yoga, rock climbing and more.

<https://www.adaptivesportsprogram.org/>.



Not Forgotten Outreach Inc.

Not Forgotten Outreach Inc. is dedicated to the reintegration and whole-health healing of active-duty military, veterans, military families, and Gold Star families of fallen heroes. Its goal is to motivate to participate in recreational and/or therapeutic activities in order to facilitate the healing process.

<https://notforgottenoutreach.org/>

VA Completes Digitization of Vietnam War-Era “Deck Logs”



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has completed an interagency effort with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to digitize declassified deck logs to process claims faster for eligible Vietnam-era veterans.

The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard deck logs within NARA contain 'helpful information being used to validate claims for Blue Water Navy (BWN) veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam, to establish presumption to herbicide exposure for service-connected disability benefits.

“The team at NARA recognizes the importance of this effort making it easier for BWN veterans to receive the benefits they’ve earned without burdening them with paperwork,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Since January 1, the VA has processed thousands of claims and encourages every veteran, dependent and surviving spouse who is eligible to file a claim as soon as possible.”

Data contained in deck logs is used when deciding VA benefit claims. Also known as ship logs or captain's logs, information was manually inputted to chronologically document the daily activities of a navy ship or unit. The VA provided the digital images of deck logs to NARA, available in the National Archives Catalog (<https://catalog.archives.gov>)



“Through this scanning project, the VA contractors digitized declassified Navy and Coast Guard deck logs from 1956-1978 in NARA's holdings, including the log of the hospital ship USS Sanctuary which I served aboard during the Vietnam conflict,” said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero. “As a veteran from this era, I recognize the unprecedented value this provides to Veterans making these logs easily accessible online.”

Digitization of all available Navy deck logs for ships that served in Vietnam was completed in December of 2019, while Coast Guard deck logs were completed in last month.

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, signed into law on June 25, 2019—and which went into effect this January-- extends the presumption of service connection for certain diseases associated with herbicide exposure. To date, the VA has collectively awarded \$641 million to more than 22,524 Blue Water Navy Veterans or survivors.

Veterans, dependents and surviving spouses may contact approved Veterans Service Organizations—such as DVS—for assistance in filling a claim. (see page 3 of this newsletter for the contact information of 17 DVS Veterans Service Officers)



VA Expands Program of Comprehensive Assistance For Family Caregivers

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today implementation of a new information technology (IT) system marking the official launch of the first phase of expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) to caregivers of eligible Veterans of earlier eras.

The Caregiver Records Management Application (CARMA) automates manual processes and integrates with other VA systems, resulting in increased efficiencies and effectiveness for VA staff.

The expansion rolls out in two phases. Phase one was launched October 1 and includes eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975.

Effective Oct. 1, 2022, the second phase will include eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty between May 7, 1975 and Sept. 11, 2001.

Through CARMA, with a click of a button, an electronic health record will be created for a family caregiver where Caregiver Support Coordinators will document their clinical interactions. CARMA will also help guide consistency by systematically adjusting VA stipend payment calculations, as appropriate, and alerting VA users when annual reassessments of PCAFC participants are due, among other key functionalities.

In addition, this program expansion also includes a new digital version of the application which allows individuals to apply for the PCAFC online.

“Caregivers provide stability and security to our most vulnerable veterans, allowing them to stay in their homes with their loved ones for as long as possible,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Through this expansion, the VA is able to give more family caregivers access to essential resources so we can support them as they care for veterans of earlier eras.”

Since publishing the final regulation on July 31 to improve and expand PCAFC — VA also expedited hiring key staff who bring the clinical qualifications and organizational skill sets to ensure consistent eligibility decision making across the enterprise, support program needs and provide strong infrastructure for consistent and standardized application processing and adjudication.

This past year, the Caregiver Support Program expanded to approximately 1,100 staff and will grow to approximately 1,800 staff within the next six months. These changes ensure Veterans and caregivers receive timely, accurate assessments and eligibility determinations, as well as an improved customer experience.

Previously, only available for eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, PCAFC provides education, support, a monthly stipend, health care coverage and certain beneficiary travel to qualifying family caregivers of eligible veterans.

VA's Caregiver Support Program offers a wide variety of support services for caregivers of Veterans. Partnerships continue to be created or enhanced to broaden services and supports for caregivers. Learn more by visiting the Caregiver Support Program website at <https://www.caregiver.va.gov>, or by calling the Caregiver Support Line at (855) 260-3274 for more information.

Fighting the Flu Together!

This year, you can receive a flu vaccine at a participating Community Care Network (CCN) Retail Pharmacy or Urgent Care Center.

*To be eligible, you must be enrolled in the VA health care system and received care at the VA or a VA community provider within the past 24 months.

*Eligible Veterans do not require a VA referral. You can go to an in-network retail pharmacy or urgent care location, present a valid government-issued identification (e.g. Veterans' Health ID Card, Department of Defense ID card, state-issued driver's license or ID card, etc.) and receive their flu shot. Eligible Veterans can receive a no-cost a standard-dose (quadrivalent) or high-dose flu shot.

To find a CCN Retail Pharmacy or Urgent Care walk-in near you (effective 9/1/20 thru 3/31/21):

- Visit the Veterans VA Facility Locator: <http://www.va.gov/find-locations/>
 - Under "Choose a Facility Type"
 - Select the urgent care or pharmacy drop-down
 - Enter ZIP Code
- Or, call the Office of Community Care National Contact Center to find a location at 1-877-881-7618

Below are the participating CVS Caremark Community Care Retail Pharmacies in our area

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| ■ CVS | ■ Safeway |
| ■ Costco | ■ Walmart |
| ■ Kroger (includes Pick'n Save in Wisconsin and Mariano's in Illinois) | ■ Wegmans |

Please note: Walgreens is **NOT** included this season.

The Community Pharmacy you visit will need the information below for billing:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| ■ BIN – 004336 | ■ PCN – ADV | ■ Group – RX3841 |
|----------------|-------------|------------------|

Once you get the flu shot, please notify your VA Health Care Team.

Disclaimer of endorsement: Reference to non-VA pharmacies or to any specific commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer or otherwise, does not constitute or VA endorsement, recommendation, or favoring these companies or their services or products.

#FIGHTFLU



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Milwaukee VA Medical Center