

DMVA Digest

A publication of Pennsylvania's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
February 21, 2018

DMVA News

DMVA's Southwestern Veterans' Center In Pittsburgh To Host Open House:

You're invited! DMVA's Southwestern Veterans' Center (SWVC), Pittsburgh (Allegheny County), will host an Open House on Friday, March. 30, 2018. Come and witness the first-class care available to PA veterans and their spouses. The staff at SWVC is ever mindful of our mission and considers it a privilege to serve those who served their country. We extend an invitation to all interested persons to visit us. [Read more.](#)

Tax Time Offers Opportunity to Help Pennsylvania's Military Families:

Individuals filing their 2017 Pennsylvania personal income taxes can help Pennsylvania's military personnel and their families by donating part or all of their refund to the state's Military Family Relief Assistance Program. The program, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, provides grants of up to \$3,500 to Pennsylvania members of the armed forces and their families who have a direct and immediate financial need as a result of circumstances beyond their control. The tax form includes instructions on how to donate. [Read more.](#)

Cabinet In Your Community Event Coming Up This Month:

Governor Tom Wolf Administration cabinet officials, including Pennsylvania's Adjutant General and head of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Maj. Gen. Tony Carrelli, will gather at East Stroudsburg University, 563 Independence Rd., East Stroudsburg, PA (Monroe County), at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 27 to talk about issues that are important to you and your region at the Cabinet In Your Community event. We hope to see you there! R.S.V.P. by calling 570-614-2090 or email cacoleman@pa.gov by Feb. 22, 2018. For a list of cabinet panelists, visit the Cabinet In Your Community flyer on DMVA's [Facebook page.](#)

Around the State

Female Veterans Share Personal Stories Of 'Coming Home':

Catherine Revak, a first-year doctoral student in clinical social work at the University of Pennsylvania, was seated comfortably toward the back of the room at the Penn Bookstore. She listened intently as former military personnel shared their experiences

during “Sacrifice and Service: When Women Come Marching Home,” a panel discussion on the obstacles involved with making the transition back to civilian life, particularly among female veterans. [Read more.](#)

KidsPeace Provides Care For Children Of Military Families:

KidsPeace is a private charity dedicated to serving the behavioral and mental health needs of children, families and communities. KidsPeace now offers a TRICARE Adolescent Residential Treatment Program at its Orchard Hills, PA Campus (Armstrong County). TRICARE certification allows KidsPeace to provide a complete continuum of care for clients whose families are in the military. [More information.](#)

Morgantown Expressway To Be Renamed For Veterans:

Separate sections of Interstate 176, which is also known as the Morgantown Expressway, will be renamed to honor veterans of the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War and the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. PennDOT has 60 days to put up signs designating the changes on I-176 under a bill amended by state Sen. Judy Schwank to include Berks County and signed into law by Gov. Tom Wolf. [Read more.](#)

Pittsburgh Department Of Veterans Affairs (VA) Healthcare System Inaugural I CARE Award Given:

A nurse practitioner who designed and created 200 handmade thank you cards for veterans has been named the first recipient of VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's new I CARE Award. VA Pittsburgh's Executive Board in January awarded its first I CARE Award to Evelyn Zimmerly, an 18-year employee and nurse practitioner in Surgery Services. The award recognizes employees who live out the VA I CARE core values of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect and excellence. [Read more.](#)

Relocation Plan For Delaware County Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC):

As part of the continuing commitment to providing high quality, comprehensive Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care to veterans residing in the Delaware County area, the Coatesville VA Medical Center (VAMC) plans to relocate the Springfield CBOC from its current location. [Read more.](#)

Warmth For Warriors Program:

Jack Lehr, Inc. is offering the unique, specially-tailored heating maintenance and repair program, Warmth for Warriors, free of charge to those called upon to deploy. It is Jack Lehr's way of saying thanks for serving our nation while also recognizing the strain placed on a serving family's finances. [Read more.](#)

We're Looking For Volunteer Drivers:

The Erie Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (Erie County) is looking for individuals who are detail-oriented, reliable and enjoy working with veterans to become a volunteer driver. The Volunteer Transportation Network is a courtesy service run by

volunteers to help veterans who have no other means of transportation by providing free rides to and from their VA medical appointments. Call 814-860-2454 today.

Across the Nation

Agent Orange, My HealtheVet And Online Help:

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military used Agent Orange, a tactical herbicide used to reduce vegetation and tree cover in Vietnam. It was also used between April 1, 1968, and Aug. 31, 1971, in Korean Demilitarized Zone. Years later, some veterans have experienced health effects potentially related to Agent Orange. [Read more.](#)

Be There For Veterans And Servicemembers:

By reaching out, you can help someone going through a difficult time feel included and supported. Small actions of support, calling up an old friend or bringing over dinner are thoughtful ways to show you care. Whether you have one minute, one hour, or more time over the course of a week, you can help someone feel less alone. [Learn more.](#)

Keep Your Contact Info Up-To-Date On My HealtheVet:

My HealtheVet can be your personal health record keeper. It keeps your personal information, such as your email address, street address, and essential contact information on record. This information isn't shared outside of My HealtheVet, but it's important to keep it updated. [Read more.](#)

National Museum Of The United States Army Taking Shape In Virginia:

On a crisp morning just before Thanksgiving, a crowd of soldiers, Army veterans and Army supporters joined more than 200 steel workers gathered on a construction site at Fort Belvoir to watch as the final steel beam of the National Museum of the United States Army was lifted into place. [Read more.](#)

PBS 'American Creed' Doc To Feature Marine Vet:

An upcoming PBS documentary exploring the national character of the United States will feature a Marine veteran who is now a University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point student. The filmmakers of 'American Creed' first approached Tegan Griffith, 33, in 2014 to see whether she would be interested in participating in their project and to determine whether she was a fit for the film. [Read more.](#)

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder And Heart Disease Can Go Hand In Hand:

When most people think of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) the first thing that comes to mind is stress. But mental health isn't the only body system that can suffer from the effects of PTSD. Researchers have known for quite some time that prolonged stress can affect multiple organ systems. [Read more.](#)

Second-Oldest Pearl Harbor Survivor Dies At 104:

At 104, Pearl Harbor survivor Navy Lt. Jim Downing was a confidant of presidents and a star of national television. From talk shows to a profile in Time magazine, Downing was feted as the second-oldest man who endured the events of Dec. 7, 1941. [Read more.](#)

U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs (VA) – Join The Great American Spit Out To Kick Chewing Tobacco:

VA is working to shine a light on the effects of smokeless tobacco and provide a path forward for veterans who are trying to quit. If you are one of those veterans, the Great American Spit Out on Feb. 22, 2018, is a perfect day to start. This annual event encourages smokeless tobacco users to set a quit date. We want veterans to know we understand that there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution for quitting smokeless tobacco. So, we offer a range of resources. [Read more.](#)

U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs (VA) Study Shows That Rocking Chairs Can Help Veterans Overcome Addiction:

Who says therapy has to be complicated? Perhaps an effective tool for treatment and recovery could be something as simple as, say ... a rocking chair. Just ask a Marine veteran who participated in a rocking chair study through the Robley Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville, KY. [Read more.](#)

U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs (VA) To Showcase Stories Of 10 Women Veteran Athletes:

From distance runners to cyclists, the stories of 10 women veteran athletes will be displayed at VA medical centers around the country in March, to coincide with Women's History Month. "The Women Veteran Athletes Initiative will highlight the strength, diversity and resilience of women who served our country," said VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin. [Read more.](#)

Veterans – Ready For Your Cholesterol Quiz?:

Cholesterol is a fat-like material that provides structure for your body's cells. Your liver makes most of the cholesterol your body needs, but you also get some from the foods you eat. Too much cholesterol can cause a sticky substance (plaque) to build up in your blood vessels. This plaque can block blood vessels and cause heart attacks and strokes. To learn more and to take the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Cholesterol quiz, visit the [Veterans Ready Cholesterol Quiz.](#)

Vietnam Prisoners Of War 40 Years Later:

On May 24, 1973, President and First Lady Nixon hosted American prisoners of war held captive in Vietnam for the largest dinner ever held at the White House. Forty years later, the Richard Nixon Foundation hosted what was perhaps their last reunion gathering. The following is a collection of television and print news coverage. [YouTube Video.](#)

Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund Application Closes March, 1, 2018:

The application deadline for the 2018 Farmer Veteran Fellowship is 5 p.m. on March 1, 2018. Last year, 50 farmer veterans from around the country received more than \$200,000 through the Fellowship to purchase items like ATVs, breeding livestock and walk-behind tractors. This year, they are looking forward to exceeding those numbers. [Read more.](#)

Five Steps To A Healthier Heart From The U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs:

February is Heart Month, a great time to take your health to heart. Each year, about 800,000 people die from heart disease. You have the power to reduce your risk of developing heart problems. VA programs and services can help you achieve five steps to a healthier heart. [Read more.](#)

Free Resume Help for Vets:

Resumes 4 Veterans, a veterans assistance non-profit is offering U.S military veterans help with their resumes for free. No signup is required. [Website.](#)

Employment Opportunities

This listing is offered as a resource to both Pennsylvania's veterans and businesses that seek to employ veterans. The DMVA has not investigated the positions being offered or the businesses listed, and does not warrant or guarantee either the availability or the terms and conditions of the positions listed. Please contact the employers represented in this listing directly. To have an employment opportunity listed please email: RA-VA-Newsletter@pa.gov

Local Medical Marijuana Facility To Employ Veterans:

Pennsylvania medical cannabis company, Terrapin Care Station is following through with its commitment to hire veterans as it prepares to open a medical marijuana facility in South Avis, PA (Clinton County). [Read more.](#)

Take A Closer Look At U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs (VA) Psychiatry Careers – Mental Health Hiring Initiative:

Improving the lives of veterans with mental health issues is incredibly rewarding, just one of the many reasons to consider becoming a VA psychiatrist. To learn more, check out the following infographic developed as part of the Mental Health Hiring Initiative. [Read more.](#)

The U.S. Department Of Homeland Security Is Hiring:

Are you looking for an exciting new career in national security? The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is hiring now for jobs around the country in a variety of fields, including law enforcement, administration and technology. Don't miss this great opportunity! [Apply.](#)

Troops To Teachers Slippery Rock University:

Troops to Teachers is a convenient, one-year program intended to help current and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces with a bachelor's degree in math, science, foreign languages or a related field, earn a teacher certification through Slippery Rock University's (Butler County) College of Education. Contact Mike Vetere at 724-880-9360 or email Michael.Vetere@sru.edu. [Website](#).

2018 Spring Career Fair:

- Feb. 27, 2018, Noon-3 p.m.
- Yorktown Hall, 8256 University Blvd., Moon, PA (Allegheny County)
- Point of contact: Kishma DeCastro-Sallis at 412-397-6333 or email sallis@rmu.edu
- [Website](#).

Veteran Events

This listing is offered as a service to individuals and organizations to promote their veteran and military-oriented events being held in Pennsylvania. The information is taken directly from emailed submissions from requestors. DMVA is not responsible for incorrect information submitted. Please send details on events to RA-VA-Newsletter@pa.gov and include the following key pieces of information: 1. Name of event, 2. Date of event, 3. Time of event, 4. Address of event, 5. County of event, 6. Event website, 7. Point of contact name, 8. POC phone number, 9. POC email address, and 10. Additional details/coordinating instructions (fees, pre-registration, etc.)

Northwest PA Veteran Entrepreneurship Program Business Financing Webinar:

- Feb. 28, 2018, 10-11:30 a.m.
- Point of contact: Meghan Keely at meghank@northwestpa.org
- Translate skills from the military to entrepreneurship and your own business. If you are a veteran who owns a business, or a veteran who would like to start a business, join us for this informative workshop that will provide details on the regional resources that are available to help you start and operate your business.
- [Register](#).

National Alliance On Mental Illness (NAMI) Family-To-Family Education Program:

- March 1, 2018, and every Thursday, 6-8:30 p.m.
- Lebanon Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC), 1700 S. Lincoln Ave., Lebanon, PA (Lebanon County)
- Point of contact: Jonathan Hart 717-272-6621 ext. 5005 to register.
- NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session education program for family, friends and significant others of adults living with mental illness.
- [Facebook](#).

Women Veteran Small Business Group:

- March 2, 2018, 1-3 p.m.
- PA Careerlink Downtown Pittsburgh, 304 Wood St., Pittsburgh (Allegheny County)
- Point of contact: Melissa Handlovitch at 412-436-2225, or email MHandlovit@pa.gov
- This event provides information on small business ownership with a special focus on women-owned small businesses. Overview on how to start a business will be followed by panel discussion with successful women small business owners.
- Open to veterans and eligible spouses. Go to the [website](#) to register.

Trout Unlimited Winter 2018 Fly Fishing Program:

- March 3 and 10, 1-3 p.m.
- South Hills School of Business & Technology, 480 Waupelani Dr., State College (Centre County)
- To register for this free class, email Dan Kerstetter at paflyfisher777@gmail.com or Jim Lanning at jlanningvsp@gmail.com
- Excellent instructors will guide you through the process of tying your own flies to catch trout on local streams. Equipment and supplies will be provided. Classes are open to all veterans and their families.
- [Website](#).

National Alliance On Mental Illness (NAMI) Homefront Education Program:

- March 6, 2018, and every Tuesday, 6-8:30 p.m.
- Lebanon Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC), 1700 S. Lincoln Ave., Lebanon (Lebanon County)
- To register contact Jonathan Hart at 717-272-6621, ext. 5005
- NAMI Homefront is a free, six-session education program for family, friends and significant others of military service members and veterans with mental health conditions. It focuses on the unique needs of military and veteran communities, such as post-deployment and post-discharge transitions.
- [Facebook](#).

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