



ODAG-VA Newsletter

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL – VETERANS AFFAIRS

May 2016

Contact ODAG-VA:

-Phone: 717-861-8910
-Toll free: 1-800-547-2838
-Fax: 717-861-8589

Follow/Like/Visit the PA Dept. of

Military & Veterans Affairs: www.dmva.pa.gov
www.facebook.com/padmva
www.twitter.com/padmva
www.flickr.com/padmva

Delaware Valley Veterans' Home: www.dvvh.pa.gov

Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center: www.gmvc.pa.gov

Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home: www.hvh.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home:
www.pssh.pa.gov

Southeastern Veterans' Center: www.sevc.pa.gov

Southwestern Veterans' Center: www.swvc.pa.gov

Memorial Day Ceremony At The Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial



Please join us for the 34th Annual Memorial Day Program in the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial located at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, Lebanon County. The ceremony will be held on May 29, 2016 at 2 p.m.

"The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs does not endorse the organizations sponsoring events mentioned in this newsletter, and we do not endorse the views they express or the products/services they offer. The views and opinions expressed in any referenced document do not necessarily state or reflect those of DMVA. The information provided is intended for your general knowledge only, and serve solely as a DMVA community outreach effort."

Help Locate Photos For The Wall Of Faces

In light of the recent Vietnam War 50th Commemoration we continue to ask for help in our search for a photo for each of the Pennsylvanians whose name is listed on the Wall Of Faces in Washington D.C.

Our intent is to preserve the legacy of those who sacrificed all in Vietnam.

If you have a picture of a loved one or a fellow Veteran whose name is listed please help us honor them.

For a list of photos needed please click [here](#)

For information on how to submit a photo visit the [Virtual Wall Of Faces website](#).

Real Estate Tax Exemption

This program provides real estate tax exemption for any honorably discharged Veteran who is 100% disabled, a resident of Pennsylvania and has a financial need.

To determine if you are eligible you must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Served in the military honorably
- Served during established war service dates as determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Must have a total or 100% permanent service connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or as the result of military service be blind or paraplegic or has sustained the loss of two or more limbs.
- Be a resident of Pennsylvania
- Occupy the real estate as your principal dwelling
- Dwelling is owned solely by the Veteran or as an estate in the entirety
- Prove financial need



For additional information please visit our Real Estate Tax Exemption [Webpage](#) or check out this [video](#).

For individual questions, please email us at Ra-retx@pa.gov or call the program manager at 717-861-8114 or 717-861-8907.

VA Introduces The Appointment Request App

If you are enrolled in VA health care, the Veteran Appointment Request (VAR) App allows you to request and view primary care and mental health appointments at VA facilities where you already receive care. VAR will also allow you to schedule and cancel selected primary care appointments directly through the app at facilities where you have a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT).

With this application you will be able to:

- Request appointment times for primary care and mental health appointments
- View the status of your appointment requests and get notifications via email when your appointment status changes
- Submit a request for a VA scheduler to call you to schedule a primary care or mental health appointment
- Search for VA facilities by state or territory, and view their address, phone number, website and operating hours
- If you have a PACT, you will also be able to use the Direct Patient Scheduling feature in the app to view primary care appointment times clinics where you have a PACT, and directly book those appointments or Cancel any appointments you have scheduled through the VAR App.

Please visit the [VA App Store](#) to access available VA Apps.

Outreach Team Calendar Of Upcoming Events

Looking for available benefits, need help, want to talk to a Veterans Service Officer? The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Outreach Team will be at the following events:

- Helping Hand Senior Health Expo, Wednesday May 4, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Sugar House Casino, 1001 N. Delaware Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19125
- Veterans Community Initiatives and Bedford County Veterans Affairs, Wednesday, May 4, 10 a.m.—2 p.m., American Legion, 3721 US-220 BUS, Bedford, PA 15522
- Veterans Appreciation Day on Penn's Creek, Saturday, May 7, 12 p.m.—8 p.m., 232 Jolly's Grove Lane, Millmont, PA 17845
- PA Cares Training Conference, Thursday, May 12, 8 a.m.—3 p.m., Keystone Conference Center, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003
- Community Night in Monroe County, Thursday, May 12, 5 p.m.—8:30 p.m., Northampton Community College, 2411 PA-715, Tannersville, PA 18372
- Honoring Veterans Weekend, Saturday, May 14, 9 a.m.—5 p.m., Shellsville VFW Picnic Woods, 328 West Crawford Road, Granville, PA 17029
- Walk For The Wounded, Saturday, May 14, 9 a.m.—3 p.m., Rose Tree Park, Route 252, Media, PA 19063
- Armed Forces Awareness Day, Saturday, May 21, 9 a.m.—5 p.m., Clearfield County Fairgrounds, 5615 Park Street, Clearfield, PA 16830
- Armed Forces Day Appreciation Picnic, Saturday, May 21, 11 a.m.—1 p.m., East Brandywine Community Park, 440 Dilworth Road, Downingtown, PA 19335
- Memorial Day Celebration, Saturday, May 28, 29 & 30, 3 p.m.—7 p.m., Steel Stacks, 101 Founders Way, Bethlehem, PA 18015
- Memorial Day Parade, Monday, May 30, 9 a.m.—1 p.m., Kings Family Restaurants, 3049 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA 15017



For a complete Listing of DMVA events visit our [Events Calendar](#).

Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair

Hiring Our Heroes is conducting a one-of-a-kind event featuring a hiring fair, networking opportunities and workshops tailored for Veteran job seekers, active duty military members, guard and reserve members and military spouses on Tuesday, May 3, 2016 at PNC Park in Pittsburgh. All registered Veterans and military spouses are eligible to receive up to two free tickets for them and their families to attend that evening's game between the Pirates and the Cubs. For registration information click [here](#).

State Veterans' Homes Recognize Volunteers

As part of National Volunteer Appreciation Month in April the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' six State Veterans Homes recognized and thanked their 1,900 outstanding volunteers for contributing more than 75,000 hours of service to residents in 2015.

"Individuals, organizations and businesses who volunteer are valuable members of each facility, and we are very thankful for their interest in serving Pennsylvania's veterans," said Andrew Ruscavage, director of the state veterans homes. "National Volunteer Appreciation Month is our opportunity to honor the ordinary people who do the extraordinary through their volunteer service, and we can only hope that it motivates others to follow their lead as it seems we can always use enthusiastic volunteers to assist our veterans."

There are a variety of ways to volunteer at state veterans homes which include: assisting with activities and field trips, visiting with residents, refilling water cups, escorting wheelchair-bound residents, assisting residents at mealtime, providing musical entertainment, reading to our residents and conducting or helping with arts and crafts to name a few.

"Some of our residents don't receive regular visits from their family and friends or they have no living family members. Volunteers can make a difference in these residents' lives simply by spending one-on-one time with them. Just one hour a week can dramatically improve the lives of our residents," said Ruscavage.

Volunteer recognition events included:

- The Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center (GMVC) located in Scranton honored its volunteers on April 12 with a luncheon. Eight individuals received their initial service pin for reaching 500 hours of service. Six other volunteers at the center received bars to add to their pins of service for reaching milestones from 1,000 to 15,000 hours. Cathleen Goff received her bar for reaching over 18,000 hours of service over her 11-year span of dedicated service to the GMVC. Several organizations were also honored including the American Legion Auxiliary - Department of Pennsylvania which dedicated 284 hours of service to the center in 2015.
- The Delaware Valley Veterans' Home (DVVH) in Philadelphia recognized their volunteers at a formal dinner on April 12. The DVVH honored John P. O'Donnell for 1,954 hours of service in 2015. O'Donnell has volunteered a total of 8,127 hours to the home since 2011. Joan Delaney was also honored for accumulating 1,050 hours of service to the home in 2015. Delaney's spouse was a resident of DVVH and recently passed away. She has dedicated herself to the home for providing quality care for her husband during the last stages of his life.
- The Southeastern Veterans' Center (SEVC) in Spring City held a luncheon for their volunteers on April 16. The center had 592 registered volunteers recording a total of 13,678 hours in 2015.
- The Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home (HVH) in Hollidaysburg honored their volunteers at a luncheon April 20 where retired Brig. Gen. Jerry G. Beck Jr., DMVA's deputy adjutant general for veterans' affairs was the keynote speaker.
- The Southwestern Veterans' Center (SWVC) in Pittsburgh held a dinner on April 28 for its volunteers, and the Pittsburgh Opera provided the entertainment. The SWVC Volunteer of the Year is Joyce Driben who has volunteered at the center since 2010. Driben, who is visually impaired, visits the center weekly with her seeing-eye dog, Tudor, to spread happiness to residents. She has accumulated a total of 505 hours of volunteer service to the center.
- The Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home (PSSH) in Erie hosted a volunteer recognition luncheon on April 30. Many local veteran organizations that support the PSSH through their various community outreach programs were in attendance.

"If you're recently retired, a student looking for community service credit or just looking for a creative outlet, then you may enjoy volunteering at a state veteran's home. If your business or community organization would like to volunteer, we can use your help too," Ruscavage added.

Events Throughout DMVA's State Veterans' Homes

Some of the 183 volunteers at DMVA's Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center gathered to celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Month. Individuals volunteered 16,375 hours last year. Cathleen Goff (front row, black suit with pink shirt) has volunteered more than 18,000 hours over 11 years at the center, the most of any of our volunteers at our six homes. Thank you to all our volunteers.



Tom Cawley, of Boy Scouts of America Troop 280 in Southampton, visited Delaware Valley Veterans' Home with his fellow Scouts to build bird feeders and bird houses with residents as part of his Eagle Scout project. The materials were donated by [Help Hospitalized Veterans](#) and once completed the Scouts will place the feeders and houses around the Home.

Billy Kelly a Marine Corps Veteran from the Korean Conflict graciously set up his collection of WWII uniforms, weapons, pictures, military maps, helmets, etc. in the community room of the Delaware Valley Veterans' Home to allow the residents to explore and discuss their personal history with some of these artifacts. Mr. Kelly spent numerous hours discussing the artifacts with the residents and family members.



Events Throughout DMVA's State Veterans' Homes



Students from Penn State Behrend's Sustainable Leadership program and the Green Behrend Task Force helped start a recycling program at the Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Erie.

Two members of the Greater Pittsburgh Alumni Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, Marissa Jamison (back far left) and her mother Ladora (back far right) visited the Southwestern Veterans' Center. The Jamisons brought personalized thank-you cards for the female Veterans and female spouses as part of Women's History Month.



24 Americans experience Intimate Partner Violence every minute of every day - including Veterans

IT'S NO GAME

Intimate Partner Violence is preventable.

#StopIPV

Ask your VA Provider for help or call
National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1.800.799.7233



Friends Of The Pennsylvania Military Museum



The Military Museum is centrally located in Pennsylvania in the village of Boalsburg, about five miles from State College and Penn State's University Park campus. The State College/Boalsburg area has many reasonable priced lodging and fine dining establishments. There are also outdoor recreation opportunities including world class trout streams and State Parks.

The Friends of the Pennsylvania Military Museum, museum staff and volunteers were delighted and honored to host the recent meeting of DMVA's State Veterans Commission Service meeting. Many Commission members were able to tour the museum and the 28th Division (AEF) Shrine after the meeting adjourned.

If your future travel arrangements allow time to stop and visit the museum, the summer hours may permit for a tour, a special event (many are for kids and grandkids) or a presentation in the Richard Koontz Memorial Lecture Series. You can get a comprehensive event schedule by clicking on the "EVENTS" header on their website, <http://pamilmuseum.org>.

Recently, the Museum reached a significant, strategic milestone when the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC), in a competitive process, selected an experienced museum design firm to design an entirely new exhibit. This exhibit will acknowledge the Museum's broadened mission to include all eras from the Penn Colony to the present along with all branches of our Armed Services as

well as the contributions of service members' families and civilians. Pennsylvania is fortunate to have a rich and rare collection of artifacts and document archives that the exhibit designer will use to bring life to the storyline crafted jointly by the Friends, Museum staff and PHMC subject matter experts. They expect the design effort to begin this summer.

In the coming months many organizations will convene their annual meetings. If you are interested in having a member of the Museum team present an information briefing on operations and programs at your annual meeting, please send your request, together with your organization's name, point of contact & contact information, place, date and time slot on your agenda, to:

Ms. Ann Carras, Business Manager
Friends of the Pennsylvania Military Museum
P. O. Box 160A
Boalsburg, PA 16827
E-mail: pmmfriendsbusmgr@gmail.com

They will do their best to accommodate you and your members.

If you are looking for a venue, consider having your annual meeting at the PA Military Museum. The museum's auditorium/conference room can accommodate up to 70 people. It has full audio-visual capability and a kitchen where light meals can be prepared. For a rental fee quotation, please send your requirements and date to their Business Manager, Ms. Ann Carras.

Article contributed by MG (Ret) John Stevens

Veterans Registry

The PA VETERANS REGISTRY is an online application that allows veterans to connect with DMVA to request information related to the valuable state benefits, programs and services offered. All registrants' information will be shared with County Directors for Veterans Affairs and other Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agencies in order to facilitate local connections. By connecting with DMVA, veterans can also opt-in to receive timely communications such as newsletters, press releases and program updates. The PA VETERANS REGISTRY is DMVA's first step in a long-term strategy to achieve a higher level of communication with our veterans as well as our partners who support them. To register click [here](#).



Attention Trout Fishing Enthusiasts

Come and fish with fellow Veterans and their families on Saturday, May 7, 2016 from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Penns Creek located at 232 Jolly's Grove, Weikert, PA 17885.

This is a free event for all reserve, active duty, Veterans and their families. Guiding on Penns Creek will be provided along with fishing equipment, if needed. Snacks provided all day long and there will be dinner at 5 p.m.

This event is being sponsored by Total Outdoors and the Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited Veterans Service Program.

For additional information please contact Bruce Fisher at 570-922-1053.

Veterans Affairs Dental Insurance Program

Delta Dental is pleased to offer the Veterans Affairs Dental Insurance Program (VADIP) for Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare and individuals enrolled in the VA's Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA).

The Veterans Affairs Dental Insurance Program is offered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and is administered by Delta Dental's Federal Government Programs division. This program began January 1, 2014.

Delta Dental's VADIP offers cost-effective dental coverage with three plan options designed to meet the various needs of VA beneficiaries. Enrollees in the VADIP are eligible for covered benefits within the service area that includes the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. Delta Dental provides access to an expansive nationwide dentist network, allowing VADIP enrollees to experience maximum cost savings, optimum program value and the highest quality of dental care available.

For more information about the VADIP eligibility, plan benefits and enrollment, please visit the website at delta-dentalvadip.org.

P.S. If you are retired from the military, please visit trdp.org for information on the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program.



Want to keep updated on DMVA?
Follow us on these
social media platforms!



facebook

www.facebook.com/padmva



www.twitter.com/padmva



<http://bit.ly/PADMVA-YouTube>



www.flickr.com/padmva

Connect with us and see the latest news, pictures
and videos from DMVA.