

WELCOME

Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services

August 11, 2021

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Participant List



Camera

Chat Panel

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attendance or ask a
question.*



INTRODUCTIONS

OPENING COMMENTS

OLD BUSINESS

AGING

Ms. Margo Coleman, Co-Chair

AGING



Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Margo Coleman	DMVA	Jonathan Bowman	DHS
Brian Natali	DMVA	Christopher Kemmerer	PA State Parks
Nick Haller	VA (VISN 4)	James Fearn	DHS (OLTL)
Beth Ellis	DHS	Tim Cleveland	Tioga Co. Veterans Affairs
Sierra Bilous	OMHSAS	Jamie Dunlap	Pa Council on the Arts
Kevin Longenecker	PDA	Erin Walters	PDA

Mission/Vision:

Expand awareness of and access to services, supports, benefits, and opportunities for Pennsylvania's aging veterans and their families and caregivers so that they may live and thrive in their communities.

Goals:

- 1) Increase awareness of services and supports for aging veterans and their families and caregivers among professionals within PA's Aging and Veteran Services networks.
- 2) Increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement among aging veterans, their families and caregivers, and those serving them.
- 3) Safeguard Pennsylvania's aging veterans from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-harm.

Goal 1: Increase awareness of services and supports for aging veterans and their families and caregivers among professionals within PA's Aging and Veteran Services networks.

“Expanding Long-Term Care Services to Pennsylvania Veterans”

Consider using public and nonpublic nursing facility bed capacity for Veterans in need of long-term care if the DMVA beds are unavailable and Improve Veterans' access to existing Home and Community Based services and programs through education and navigation services”

How? *collaborating with PPL office to gather information on how to make this change happen*

Who? *Margo and Jonathan, PPL staff*

What? *information gathering with focus on how to improve reporting and policy change for use of public and non-public nursing facilities*

When? *March 9th, 2021*

Outcome: The role of the aging committee would be better served by generating an awareness campaign providing communications to local nursing homes on how to identify veterans and getting them assessed or reassessed through the federal VA so they could access benefits through that route.

Goal 2: Increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement among aging veterans, their families and caregivers, and those serving them.

How? Educational videos jointly presented by aging and veteran system stakeholders to explain important programming and resources for aging veterans and caregivers to establish

Who? *TBD*

What? *TBD*

When? *TBD*

Goal 3: Safeguard Pennsylvania’s aging veterans from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-harm.

“Expanding Long Term Care Services to Pennsylvania Veterans”

Identify barriers in Long Term Care when reporting potential financial exploitation and Collaborate with agency stakeholders to identify areas for judiciary or policy change to improve reporting and outcomes

How? *Partner with financial exploitation study to glean information on recommendations and policy changes*

Who? *Margo and Jonathan in conjunction with PDA and the IDT task force state agencies*

What? *Interagency collaboration to prevent financial exploitation*

When? *Monthly through April*

Outcome: Aging committee was able to provide 2 recommendations to the FETF and the FETF has adopted those changes as part of their Task Force Strategy

1. Create a feedback loop between law enforcement and long-term care facility staff to help identify possibly missed opportunities/evidence during an investigation. It may help improve investigations in long-term care facilities to have the assistance of a trained detective to identify any areas missed during the investigation.

2. If a Report of Need is made from an agency, rather than a private party, the outcome of the investigation should be shared between agencies.

Next steps: Reaching out to local law enforcement agencies and BVH staff to invite to a handful of meeting to discuss best practices, challenges, and opportunities when reporting possible financial exploitation. Hoping to host 5 meetings and be ready for reporting in September when the full FETF being led by Sec. Torres reconvenes.

Recommendation 1

- Hold a cross-system conference for aging, long-term service and support system and veteran system stakeholders and advocates

Committee will begin to brainstorm options for achieving this recommendation

What is one thing we want to do to achieve this? Aging committee to collaborate with the protecting aging veterans sub committee to identify area to target for distributing information to stakeholders

Recommendation 2

- Educational videos jointly presented by aging and veteran system stakeholders to explain important programming and resources for aging veterans and caregivers. Post to social media, YouTube, stakeholder websites.

Committee will begin to brainstorm options for achieving this recommendation

What is one thing we want to do to achieve this? Meet with DMVA communications department to identify if there are any archived programs that we could use that could be shared with local PBS stations and/or news stations that would donate free airtime to broadcast our message. Identify what form of media might reach the broadest audience as older Pennsylvania's may not be as familiar with or as comfortable with using social media platforms.

Recommendation 3

- Initiate the veteran pension poaching postcard effort
 - Protecting Aging Veteran's Sub Committee continues to spear head this initiative.

Recommendation 4

- Host regional or local town halls or listening forums for aging veterans, their families and caregivers to attend – time to learn about resources, voice concerns, identify service gaps, brainstorm innovative solutions
 - Committee will begin to brainstorm options for achieving this recommendation
 - What is one thing we want to do to achieve this? Possibly utilize local PBS stations who may want to do a specific piece on Aging Veterans and their interests, needs, experiences etc.

HOMELESS

Mrs. Samantha Cossman, Chair

HOMELESS



Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Samantha Cossman (Chair) Jen Spitler Susan Meighen	DMVA	Bill Cress/ Mary Siegel Alexis Kelly Beth Farabaugh Airika Pollard Kamie Mazza Rob Greco	VISN 4 Homeless Programs Office Wilkes-Barre VA Homeless Team Altoona VA Homeless Team Lebanon VA Homeless Team Erie VA Homeless Team Philadelphia VA Homeless Team
Tom Applebach Brian Querry Danny Osten Lisa Kaye John Cyprian Dennis Miller	Lehigh CDVA Centre CDVA Cumberland CDVA Monroe CDVA Butler CDVA Montgomery CDVA	Bill Reed Vandy Rider, various staff Hayley Miller Kim Kennedy LaShon Fryer Don Cave Various staff	YWCA of Greater Harrisburg VMC Central PA / VMC – HQ Veterans Leadership Program Volunteers of America PA Community Action Agency of Delaware Co. Utility Emergency Services Fund Catholic Charities of Diocese of Allentown
Lauren Whitleigh Dina Ciabattoni David Weathington Chuck Keenan	Eastern PA CoC Beaver CoC Philadelphia CoC Allegheny CoC	Angela Susten Danielle Rudy Jeff Geibel Kim Wentzel Jim Fearn Beth Ellis	DCED PHFA DDAP PDA OLTL DHS
Micah Snead	GAC-VS MAL	Donna Hess/ Michelle Baxter	OMHSAS

Vision:

Be the premier forum for seamless communication and collaboration in effectively understanding and responding to veteran homelessness within Pennsylvania.

Mission:

Build collaborative intergovernmental and community-based relationships to identify and promote awareness of the resources that could help veterans experiencing or at risk of housing instability.

HOMELESS



Recommendation 1: Consider action on issues deemed most pressing by stakeholders: lack of warming shelters, lack of emergency shelter beds, lack of affordable housing, impacts of COVID-19

Recommendation 2: Advocate for Coordinated Entry Access Sites to more VA Medical Centers and SSVF providers

Recommendation 3: Seek to uncover more resources for National Guard or Reservists who do not qualify for SSVF or traditional veteran homeless programs and advocate for a streamlined and standard referral flow for these individuals

Recommendation 4: Have PA VETConnect RPOCs routinely engage in CoC scrub calls and homeless veteran list reviews

Recommendation 5 – workgroup established; recurring meetings being held; Erica Moore lead: Collaborate with Women Veterans committee to seek more solutions for women veterans (and those with children) experiencing trauma which could lead to homelessness

Recommendation 6 – discussions underway: Partner with Aging Committee to discuss potential solutions for aging veterans who experience housing instability and discuss ways to promote better communication with long-term care industry

Recommendation 7 – workgroup established; recurring meetings being held; Jen Spitler lead: Partner with Judiciary Committee to discuss potential solutions for hard-to-place veterans exiting incarceration who have been historically hard-to-place

Recommendation 8: Obtain data from all CoCs, all SSVFs and all VA Medical Centers on a quarterly basis to better understand veteran homelessness across PA

Recommendation 9 – completed: Provide DCED, PHFA and PHAs with insight on veteran advocates who can speak to the need for veteran-specific housing and help developers plan wisely regarding location and tenancy plans for new or revitalized housing


New Committee Recommendation:

Promotion of VA's Project CHALENG

(Community Housing Assessment, Local Education, and Networking Groups)

- Raise awareness of and promote participation in the annual VA CHALENG survey
- Work with VISNs 4, 2 and 5 to obtain survey results pertinent to PA counties and analyze reports for unmet needs and resource gaps
- Assist VAMCs with their CHALENG meetings
- Legal assistance was an unmet need noted in 2020 CHALENG survey outcomes – 50% of top 10 unmet needs for both male and female veterans were for legal assistance of some sort
 - Question for Judiciary Committee – are there members who are willing to discuss a plan to address these needs in PA?

VA Homeless Programs:

- **2021 VA CHALENG survey:** open for responses through at least 30 Sept 2021
 - Link to survey: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/chaleng.asp>
 - QR code for survey: 
 - Complete a survey for each VA catchment you provide service within or have insight for.
 - Veterans who are or have experienced homelessness and those with insight into the needs of homeless veteran households including VA staff, state and local government, community providers, and interested community members should participate.
- **2021 CHALENG meetings:** VAMCs are still determining whether they can host in-person meetings or virtual meetings this year, or if they will only be able to promote the survey.
 - Wilkes-Barre – 9/17 virtual
 - Butler – targeting November

VA Homeless Programs:

- **VAMCs can now accept HUD-VASH referrals under the new expanded criteria** (1 day active-duty service, no dishonorable, no court martial). This is the same criteria for SSVF and GPD.
- **If receiving VA homeless services under expanded criteria noted above**, veteran could have access to a free Samsung phone with a one-year data plan. Contact VAMC about eligibility and availability.
- VA just established a national contract with rideshare programs to help **those enrolled with VA homeless services under the expanded criteria noted above** get to appointments (medical, housing, SSVF office). Brand new and more to come!

Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF):

- Awards for FFY 2022 have been announced.
- SSVF information paper and coverage map have been updated.
- 12 grantees remain the same since FFY 2019.
- All 12 grantees saw increases in their awards.
- A total of \$16,189,386 was awarded to our 12 SSVF grantees for FFY 2022.
 - This is an increase of nearly \$2 million from FFY 2021 but is still less than the overall amount received by PA grantees in FFY 2017 and FFY 2018.
 - Please note that VMC-Philadelphia serves 5 counties in PA as well as 10 counties between NJ and DE. Their award is for their entire coverage area, not only PA counties. They estimate that their FFY 2022 spending in PA will be about \$3.5mil of their nearly \$5.5mil award.

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SSVF award amounts received by 12 grantees since FFY 2019.

(Source of info: [FFY 2022 SSVF Grant Awards](#))

(Tan indicates a decrease in award amount from previous FFY; green indicates an increase in award amount from previous FFY.)

2019	2020	2021	2022
\$1,884,122	\$1,921,805	\$1,959,761	\$2,057,749
\$721,788	\$771,373	\$786,608	\$825,938
\$2,060,487	\$2,101,697	\$2,143,206	\$2,250,366
\$884,814	\$902,511	\$920,336	\$966,353
\$1,030,244	\$1,050,849	\$1,071,604	\$1,125,184
\$578,469	\$571,438	\$582,724	\$611,860
\$217,526	\$221,877	\$226,260	\$237,573
\$657,690	\$670,844	\$684,094	\$718,299
\$183,090	\$170,204	\$302,157	\$317,265
\$431,986	\$440,626	\$449,328	\$471,794
\$1,020,001	\$1,040,402	\$1,060,950	\$1,113,998
\$4,128,534	\$4,211,105	\$4,294,275	\$5,493,007
\$13,798,750 across 12 grantees	\$14,074,731 across 12 grantees	\$14,481,303 across 12 grantees	\$16,189,386 across 12 grantees

HOMELESS



- VMC-Central PA is now serving as a veterans' coordinated entry access site for the 33 counties in the Eastern PA CoC. Veterans can call there directly at 1-844-226-0368, ext. 206.
- VLP is also serving as a veterans' coordinated entry access site, but only for Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset Co.
- All 12 SSVF grantees were prepped to provide data ahead of Nov. GAC-VS meeting.
- SSVF is about more than just housing veterans. It is about connecting them to the resources they need to address the issues that led to, or resulted from, homelessness. In many cases, SSVF literally saves lives!
 - VOA: Vet on street with life-threatening physical health issues. Brought into bridge housing and team persuaded vet to go to hospital. Will move into housing on 1 Sept.
 - YWCA: Vet in PSH with substance use disorder which hit crisis point recently. Opioid response team encouraged him to seek treatment which he stated saved his life.
 - VLP: Vet in a shelter was asked to leave when his previous incarceration was discovered. He was connected to housing where he developed a deep friendship with another veteran in the building. Now they are roommates with the supports they need to thrive.

Miscellaneous updates:

- Committee will continue spotlight presentations at monthly meetings to highlight various programs that can support veteran households and homeless providers.
 - Spotlights are considered a value-add by members.
 - Open invitation to other Committees' members or Council members.
- CDC Eviction Moratorium ended 7/31/21.
 - Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) is available in each county - <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/ERAP/Pages/ERAP.aspx>
 - Are they screening for military service in order to see if someone could be referred to SSVF or another veteran-centric program? Do they know about SSVF?
 - Legal Aid network - <https://palegalaid.net/legal-aid-providers-in-pa>

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Crystal Houser, Chair

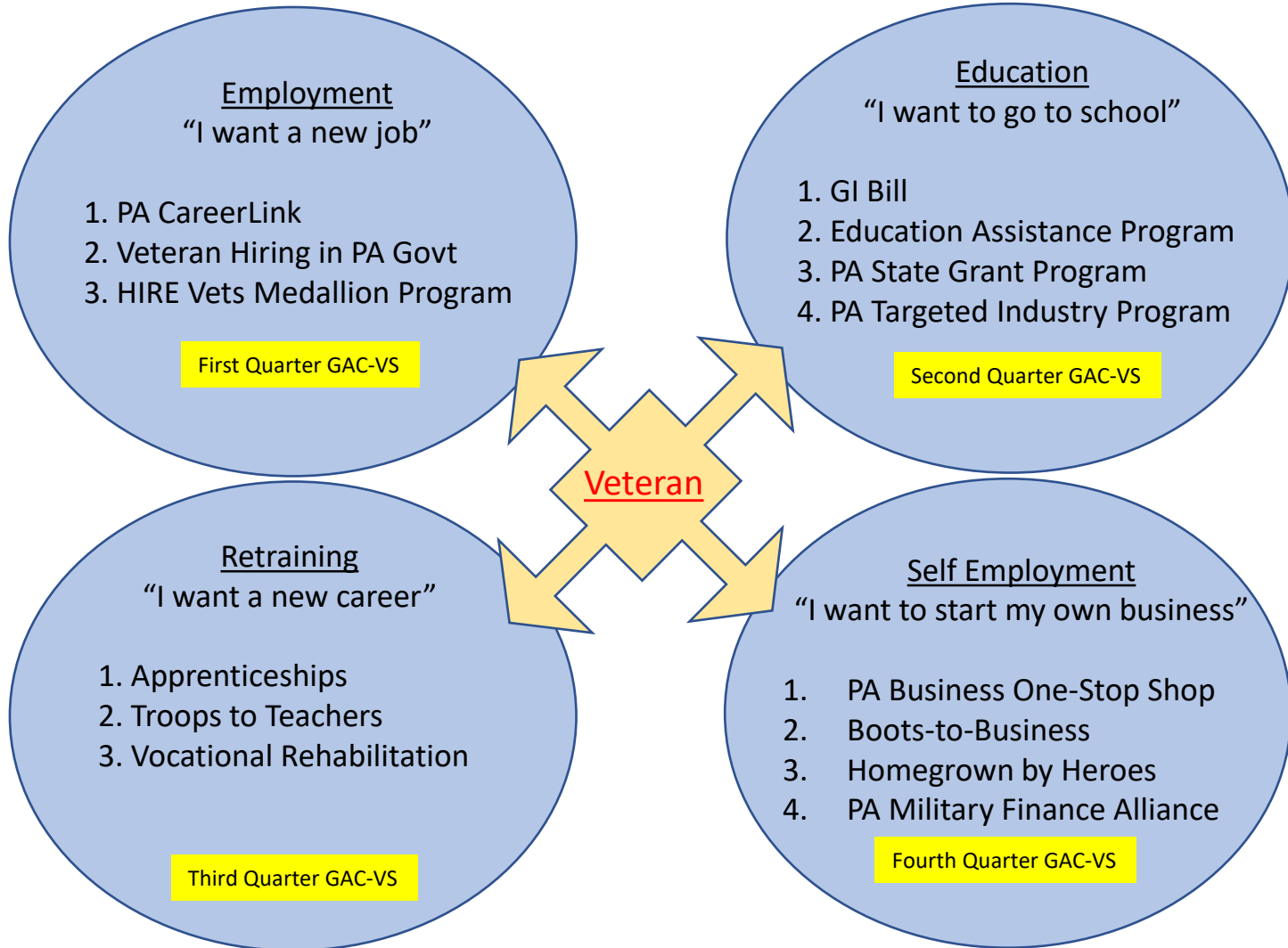
Name	Affiliation
Thomas Applebach	Country Director
Kory Auch	Office of Administration
Chelsea Ellsworth	Military & Veterans Affairs
Tara Okon	Labor & Industry
Crystal Houser	Labor & Industry
Christina Kotsalos	Banking & Securities
Billy Lanham	US Dept of Labor/ VETS
Terrell Martin	Community & Economic Development
Joshua Scheinberg	Department of Agriculture
Denise Verchimak	Department of Education

VISION

Create greater awareness and synergy among agencies serving veterans when they are asking themselves “What do I want to do next?”

GOALS

1. Establish a recurring rhythm to present program information, magnitude, results and initiatives to the GAC-VS
2. Use program understanding to better connect the information to the entities that need it most ... those that engage veterans daily
3. Fully synergize agency programs into the PA VETConnect model



“I WANT A NEW CAREER”

1. Apprenticeships
2. Troops to Teachers
3. Vocational Rehabilitation

Registered Apprenticeship

Concept

- It is an employer-driven, “learn-while-you-earn” structured training model specific to an occupation
- Combines on-the-job learning with job-related technical instruction.
- An apprentice is a full-time, paid employee from the start of the program
- Upon completion, apprentices receive a national portable credential from Pennsylvania (JOURNEY WORKER CERTIFICATE).
- To learn more about Registered Apprenticeships or Pre-Apprenticeships, contact us at RA-LIATO-PPPR-TRAIN@pa.gov

State Participation

- **Veterans** can access local, State, and Federal Workforce Development funds to provide support for apprenticeship, including wage reimbursements to employers or wrap around services for apprentices: WIOA Funds, Pell Grant
- **GI Bill:** tax-free monthly stipend in addition to the wages they receive as an apprentice. Veterans also receive tuition and fee payments for classroom instruction.
- Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) Initiative: \$1,500 per apprentice to support the classroom or on-the-job training of apprentices from underserved populations: including women, people of color, **veterans** and young adults (ages 16-24).
- As part of the PAsmart initiative, funds are available to support program infrastructure building and concentrate on initiatives serving underserved populations like **veterans**
- DCED, L&I, Dept. of Ed., OVR, DHS, Dept. of AG, and Corrections are all involved in apprenticeship initiatives, often with a statewide reach

Registered Apprenticeship

PA Key Data/Trends

- **877 unduplicated program sponsors: organizations, that operate in some cases multiple programs and assume the responsibility for administration and operation of such programs**
- **1,584 Registered Apprenticeship Programs across the Commonwealth and 72 registered Pre-apprenticeship programs**
- **17,504 registered apprentices currently active.**
- **8.5% of the currently active apprentices identified as veterans**
- **Since the ATO's inception in 2016, Apprenticeships in the Education sector have grown by 83%, the Healthcare sector by 71%, and in Technology by 64%**
- **Published data that highlighted Pennsylvania's lead in the six-state region (PA, WV, VA, DE, MD, DC) in total number of programs, apprentices, and completions.**

Key Changes/Initiatives

- **Updated the PA apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship standards acceptance and registration process**
- **Updating our Labor and Industry and PA CareerLink web pages**
- **Creating PA specific knowledge products**
- **In the future: offering workshops and training for workforce development staff, as we want these individuals to know the who, what, when, where, why, to connect their jobseeker or employer clients to apprenticeship.**

Troops to Teachers

Concept

- Assist transitioning service members with meeting the requirements necessary to obtain teaching certification.
- Provide individualized counseling to assist program participants in exploring and selecting the best pathway to teaching based on unique needs, goals and skills
- Address teacher shortage areas in the K-12 schools that service low-income families in critical shortage areas

State Participation

- Provide grant oversight to assure deliverables are met
- Provide leadership within the Department of Education to assure cooperation and support for the program
- Address barriers that prevent veterans from meeting teacher certification requirements

PA Key Data/Trends

- Over 7,000 veterans have received specific and targeted information related to the program
- To date, 75 program participants have been hired
- Since the PA TTT grant pilot program, 148 individuals have completed the requirements to become a TTT participant. 100% of these individuals have received one-one counseling through personal e-mails or phone calls
- Over 1,000 veterans have been provided information regarding certification via phone calls, e-mails, up meetings

Key Changes/Initiatives

- Due to the re-alignment of funding within the United States Department of Defense, the Troops to Teachers program will be sunsetted on October 1, 2021.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Education has decided to use remaining grant funds to continue providing services to veterans through May 2022. The state office for the Troops to Teachers program will be operational during this extension time.
- Mercyhurst University will continue to provide veterans with options for teacher certification at a 50% reduced tuition rate. There are currently 25 TTT participants enrolled.
- Temple University is continuing to provide services to TTT participants.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Concept

- Eligibility-based Program
- Evaluations-Vocational & Diagnostic
- Counseling
- Training
- Restorative Services
- Placement Assistance
- Assistive Technology
- Support Services

State Participation

- 21 District Offices
- Designated Veteran Counselors
- Designated Veteran Coordinators in each office
- Cooperative planning with Federal VR
- Cooperative planning with CareerLink staff
- Collaboration with Dept. of Ag Veteran Liaison
- VR Counselors in Veteran Hospitals

PA Key Data/Trends

- State Fiscal Year 2016-2017
 - 2,230 Veterans served
 - 391 achieved employment outcome
- State Fiscal Year 2017-2018
 - 1,909 veterans served
 - 305 achieved employment outcome
- State Fiscal Year 2018-2019
 - 1,761 veterans served
 - 286 achieved employment outcomes

Key Changes/Initiatives

- Comprehensive Workforce Collaboration
- Employer wage reimbursement
- On job training
- Assistance with purchase of tools, licenses & equipment
- Worksite evaluations for disability compliance
- Pre-apprenticeship programs with employers
- Approved Apprenticeship Programs with Private Industry

HEALTH PROMOTIONS

Ms. Donna Tilley-Hess, Chair

HEALTH PROMOTIONS



Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Parker Beene	DOH	AJ Byerly, Jolene Richardson, Lori Murphy	PAANG & PAARNG Psychological Health
Angela Keen	VISN 4	Jennifer Hagaman	VSO, Clinton Cty.
Leslie Neal & Lana Venur	VSO, Elk Cty.	Danny A. Osten	VSO, Cumberland Cty.
Frederick Nardei	Pittsburgh VA	Matthew Zamosky	VSO, West Moreland County
Jose Lopez	Resilience & Risk Reduction Prog. Coordinator, PAARNG	Ginny Mastrine	DHS, OMHSAS
Mark Todero	Suicide Prevention Program Contractor, PAARNG	Donna Tilley Hess	DHS, OMHSAS
Joann P Tresco	Alcohol & Drug Control Officer, Contractor, PAARNG	Jennifer Spitler	DMVA - RPOC
LTC Gerard M Wrazien	SMFS Director, PAARNG	Roy Remone	Compeer/Vet2Vet
Rick Hamp	DMVA	Govan Martin	Chair/Executive Director - Suicide Prevention Alliance
Joel Mutschler	DMVA	Michael Volz	VBA
Jeff Geibel	DDAP	Laura Cunningham	Acadia Healthcare
William A Charpentier	Eastern Lead Military & Family Readiness Specialist, PAARNG	Perri Rosen & Lori Mentzer	OMHSAS SUICIDE PREVENTION
Dr. Noretta Kime	PAANG	Dorothy Watkins	Resilience and Risk Reduction Program Coordinator, PAARNG

Mission:

Using a holistic approach, the Health Promotion Committee will identify physical, behavioral health and other wellness service providers to foster relationships and build resource awareness among service members, veterans and their families across the commonwealth. Ongoing collaboration with federal, state, local government and community partners will facilitate and identify effective prevention and treatment approaches, share training and education resources and promote communication of these resources to Pennsylvania service members, veterans, and their family members to assist in reducing unhealthy behaviors and the number of suicides in Pennsylvania.

Vision:

Our overarching vision is to see thriving service members, veterans, and their families across the commonwealth with zero suicides among those who have served our nation.

Goals:

1. Continued provision of trainings such as: Mental Health First Aide (MHFA), Question Persuade Refer (QPR), and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Trainings will occur through DMVA's regional program, 3 per quarter annually (1 per month based on region would be a minimum starting point).
2. Create 2 Fairweather Lodges annually.
3. Hold evidenced-based training annually providing a specific modality known to be an effective treatment for veterans, and continue collaborative MH/BH training summits in PA.

HEALTH PROMOTIONS



The Health Promotion Branch of **Service Member Family Support** has worked in collaboration with community resources to ensure our service members, who are community members 28 days out of the month, are able to recognize risk/warning signs and get the next level of care as needed.

Accomplishments and pending events FY 2021:

- Resilience and Engage Distance Learning – **Sound Mind During Uncertainty**, 10 seats per class, 8 classes offered, 40 completions – workshops currently suspended.
- **Start Program by Living Works** (ASIST creators) 1.5hour class, what intervention looks like (waiting on licensing, SFC Lopez working with South Carolina on this.)
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (**ASIST**) – Since January 21, two of our ASIST T4Ts trained 41 members of their unit while being deployed. Another 55 Soldiers were trained here at FT Indiantown Gap. We have 1 more workshop currently scheduled 7-8 SEP with 25 students registered.
- Ask Care Escort-Suicide Intervention (**ACE-SI**) – Since January 21 we conducted four classes training 46 Soldiers. We have 1 more class currently scheduled for 9 SEP with 20 students registered.
- **Master Resilience Trainers**, trained 12 in FY 21, projected another 2 for remainder of FY.
- **Master Resilience Trainers, Level II** Facilitators, trained 3 Soldiers in 21.
- Suicide Prevention/Resource event. These events focus on small group discussions and connectedness. Since July 2020 **we meet w/18 units and personally spoke w/ 1500 Soldiers and leaders.**
- Continued support of local community resource exchange and other military efforts.
- **5K Run for Life/Resource Event** scheduled for 10 SEP @ Memorial Lake. Approx. 15 – 20 vendors & 150 soldiers to be reached.

**Follow PNG Service Members & Family Support Division on Facebook
to see upcoming events for veterans and families.**

<https://www.pa.ng.mil/Offices-Programs/Service-Member-Family-Support/Resiliency-Risk-Reduction-Suicide-Prevention/>

HEALTH PROMOTIONS



PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD (PNG) ALWAYS READY, ALWAYS THERE

Founded when Ben Franklin formed The Associators in Philadelphia in 1747, the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG) is comprised of both the PA Air National Guard (**PAANG**) and PA Army National Guard (**PAARNG**). Together we serve our community, commonwealth and country. The Pennsylvania National Guard Joint Force Headquarters is located at Fort Indiantown Gap, PA.

PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

ARMY

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Elizabeth Hayman, LCSW – Allentown
Junie Kacer, LCSW – Scranton
Jessica McDonald, LSW - Horsham
Christy Nyakana, LCSW - Erie

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Matt Dalrymple DPH 171 AFW (currently deployed)

Star Behavioral Health Providers Program (SBHP – PAARNG joined Dec. 2019)

The SBHP provides three levels of training (Tiers) for civilian behavioral health providers in your state and local communities who are interested in serving the military population, particularly NG members. SBHP offers a public online registry or listing that allows service members, their families, military behavioral health providers, military leaders, and others to easily search for trained providers in their areas. The goal is to **expand access by providing culturally competent, evidence-based behavioral health treatment through this training program**. Launched nearly 10 years ago, SBHP was developed as a partnership of the Indiana National Guard, National Guard Bureau, Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration, Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP), and Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University (MFRI).

- Offers free CE to providers
- Over 450 training workshops completed
- Has provided 142,000+ training hours
- Nearly 1,000 providers on the registry in approximately 20 States
- Workshops significantly increase BH providers confidence to treat service members and veterans
- Significant gains in participants' knowledge about military culture, treating military populations and evidence-based psychotherapies (EBPs).
- Monthly engagement calls between registered providers and PA ARMY National Guard to cultivate relationships between us, share resources and make connections.

Star Behavioral Health Program (SBHP) UPDATE:

- Since MAR21, three Tier 1, three Tier 2 and three Tier 3 trainings have been offered. Due to high volume of individuals on wait lists (over 100 each) to attend trainings, maximum capacity for attendees has increased from 175 to 200 individuals per training.
- A total of 610 individuals were trained this past quarter.
- Currently, all training opportunities are filled through September, but they hope to roll out the new training flyer for October-December trainings sometime in August.
- Training opportunities will decrease next year due to funding restraints.
- PA has 8 registry providers in which 5 came on board CY21.
- They have 51 Pennsylvania participants registered for upcoming trainings.
- Live in person trainings are still in the works - it is anticipated that majority of trainings will still be hosted via Zoom next year, perhaps indefinitely.

For more information: <https://deploymentpsych.org/STAR-CE-Mem>

To register, visit www.starproviders.org

Federal Partnerships & Collaborative Efforts:

- During the 3rd quarter of this fiscal year, VISN 4 CEPCs have established 9 new community coalitions, one per VISN site catchment area.
- A successful virtual 2021 DOD/VA Suicide Prevention Conference, involving many commonwealth participants, was held this past May.
- Currently moving forward with getting as many residential beds, as safely possible, open.
- VISN 4 continues to provide video-based MH treatment and is expanding face to face care options to meet veteran preference. In June, VISN 4 35% of mental health visits were face to face, up from 31% in May.
- Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention (CBI-SP) continue to serve as a unifying model for all community-based efforts, throughout all national and community levels, in support of VA's Mission to end veteran suicide.
- VISN 4 continues to be an active and ongoing participant in the PA Governor's Challenge work groups and the NW PA Veteran Suicide Prevention/CDC Advisory group.

Federal Partnerships & Collaborative Efforts continued:

Federal Partnerships & Collaborative trainings continued:

Accredited, Veteran-Focused Competency Courses Available Online

Administrative note: Please share this with anyone at your office or facility who communicates with public health providers.

Community providers who treat Veterans are invited to take a variety of self-paced, accredited online courses, offered 24/7 through [VHA TRAIN](#) MISSION Act (MA) Curriculum, to help meet MISSION Act 131 and 133 competency standards. Sections 131 and 133 require VA to ensure that all community providers treating Veterans meet certain requirements regarding opioid prescribing practices and meet certain competency standards.

These courses available on VHA TRAIN MA provide training and resources in the areas of military culture, suicide prevention and other Veteran-related topics, equipping community providers with general knowledge about mental and physical health diagnoses commonly found in the Veteran population. Click [here](#) for a flyer that can be used to locally promote these courses.

Click on any of following courses to learn more and register:

[Community Care Provider Opioid Safety Initiative](#) – This course was designed to build a collaborative effort between VA and non-VA care providers, to promote evidence-based management of Veterans with chronic pain, improve patient outcomes and decrease incidence of complications when prescribing opioids. No accreditation offered.

[Community Care Provider: A Perspective for Veteran Care](#) – This course offers an introduction for community providers to Veterans and diagnoses that are deemed more common in Veteran patients. Accreditations offered: AAPA, ACCME, ACCME-NP, APA, ANCC, ASWB, NYSED SW and JA IPCE.

[MISSION Act 133: A Core Training on Military Sexual Trauma \(MST\) for Community Medical Professionals](#) – This course is designed to provide community medical professionals with brief training on key information related to the care of Veterans who experienced MST. Accreditations offered: ACCME, ACCME-NP, ANCC and JA IPCE.

[MISSION Act 133: A Core Training for Military Sexual Trauma \(MST\) for Community Mental Health Providers](#) – This course is designed to provide community mental health providers with training on key information related to the care of Veterans who experienced MST. Accreditations offered: APA, ASWB, NBCC and JA IPCE.

[MISSION Act 133: Traumatic Brain Injury](#) – This course is designed to provide community providers with general training and resources in the areas of military culture, traumatic brain injury, suicide prevention and other related topics. Accreditations offered: ACCME, ACCME-NP, ANCC, AOTA, APA, APTA, ASWB and JA IPCE.

[MISSION Act Section 133: PTSD Course](#) – This course gives community providers basic information on the diagnosis and treatment of PTSD. Accreditations offered: ACCME, ACCME-NP, APA, ANCC, ASWB, NBCC, NYSED SW and JA IPCE.

Community providers must be registered in [VHA TRAIN MA Curriculum](#) with a National Provider Identifier (NPI number). [Registration](#) only takes a few minutes, and the benefits offered are immeasurable. A VHA TRAIN MA Curriculum account offers 24/7 access to hundreds of accredited courses on numerous subject matters in order to meet the learning needs of community providers caring for the Nation's Veterans. In addition, registered users have access to over 5,000 accredited courses in VA's main VHA TRAIN site. Click [here](#) to access a catalog of VHA TRAIN MA courses available and [here](#) for VHA TRAIN courses.

For help with course subjects or competencies, please contact the VHA TRAIN help desk at VHATRRAIN@va.gov. For further information about the MISSION Act courses above, please contact support@missionact.org.

[MissionActFlyer_OCC_promo.pdf \(va.gov\)](#)

Ongoing PA Partnerships & Collaborative Efforts

State Suicide Prevention Plan

State Suicide Prevention Task Force

VA/SAMHSA Governors Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among SMVF

Mayors Challenge – City of Pittsburgh

Mayors Challenge – City of Philadelphia SP Task Force

SAMHSA Technical Assistance Learning Seminars

Together With Veterans – Carbon County

Reach Out PA

Updated Guidance from the Governor’s Policy Office will be incorporated into Governor’s Challenge Priority Team 2 initiatives

CDC Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Grant (\$1M/5 Years or \$5M total)

PA VETConnect Region 1 (15 counties)

Includes VA/SAMHSA Logic Models and Priority Action Plans

USDVA Tele-Town Halls

USDVA Veteran Experience Office (VEO)

VA Community Veterans Engagement Boards (CVEB)

Virtual Veteran Engagement Action Center (V-VEAC)

Rally Point

DDAP Substance Use Disorder Grants (\$2M)

Just For Today Recovery

Veterans Multi-Service Center

Treatment Court Advocacy Center of Lackawanna County

Valhalla Veterans Services

Jarett Yoder Foundation

Robert m. Jackson Veterans Center

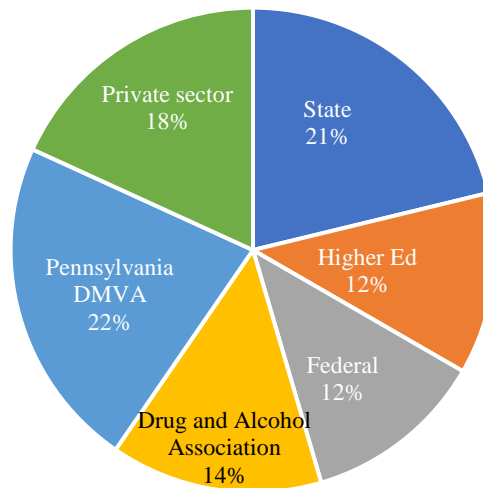
Veterans Place of Washington Blvd

Venango Training & Development Center and The Human Services Center, VFW Lodges (MFTP grant)

VA/SAMHSA Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among SMVF Pennsylvania's Priorities

1. Identify SMVF and Screen for Suicide Risk
2. Promote Connectedness and Improve Care Transitions
3. Increase Lethal Means Safety and Safety Planning

GOVERNOR'S CHALLENGE TEAM REPRESENTATION



HEALTH PROMOTIONS



Pennsylvania Americans showing
Compassion, Assistance, and Reaching out with Empathy for Service members

Co-Chairs: Lorita Valente and William “Andy” Charpentier
Lvalente@luthercare.org william.a.charpentier2.civ@mail.mil

Meeting Presenter Schedule

Aug 12th: The Veterans Channel
Sept 9th: Central PA Food Bank/Military Share
Oct 14th: U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center
Nov: No meeting in lieu of Veterans Day Events
Dec 9th: Veteran Fairweather Lodge

Meeting type: TEAMS Meeting with call in option. **Time:** 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM **2ND THURS.OF THE MONTH**
Call in number: +1 267-332-8737 **Meeting ID:** 589 736 449#

WOMEN VETERANS

Colonel Christine Munch, Chair

WOMEN VETERANS



Members	Affiliation
Christine Munch	Commander, 111th Mission Support Group, PAANG
Lisa Kaye	County Director for Veterans' Affairs, U.S. Army Veteran
JoAnn Tresco	Service Members & Family Support Branch, PA ARNG, Veteran Retired
Rhonda Smith	Air Force Veteran, Veteran small business owner
Althea Cirillo	Mentor, Veterans' Court of Dauphin County, USAR Retired
Audrey Bergstresser	Former VFW Service Officer, Vietnam Vets of America
Sierra Bilous	DHS, Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, PAANG
Marilyn Kelly-Cavotta	Director of Veteran & Military Affairs, Moravian College, Retired PAARNG
Dwaneen Hicks	DHS, Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
Elizabeth Cooper	DVOP Specialist, PA CareerLink – Adams & Franklin Counties, U.S. Army Veteran (active duty and PA ARNG)
Erica Moore	PA DMVA, Bureau of Veterans' Programs, Initiatives, Reintegration, and Outreach, Regional Program Outreach Coordinator (SE)
Ivy Lloyd	Veteran Service Officer, Philadelphia, PAARNG Veteran

WOMEN VETERANS



Actions since last meeting:

• Trauma Workgroup

- Working w/RPOCs to develop listing of non-profits/organizations led by women vets
- Continued discussions about fears women veterans have re: coming forward about Military Sexual Trauma
- Ms. Cooper accepted into WoVeN (Women Veterans Network) virtual training at end of Aug
 - Will be certified as a Group Leader for Peer 2 Peer interactions
- Ms. Cooper performed outreach session in Chambersburg; delivered resources/info to female offenders

• Women Veterans Outreach Toolkit (draft expected to be done by end of month)

- Next step: Final review by Women's Committee
- Follow on steps: Initial Distribution – electronic; publication of hard copies

• Partnerships

- Committee reps will attend/present at PA VFW Women Veterans Retreat in mid-Oct
- Trauma Workgroup's efforts:
 - Humana reps connecting us w/DAV & American Legion women veteran groups
 - Connecting w/faith-based community partners re: their women-focused groups

WOMEN VETERANS



Actions since last meeting (con't):

- Pending: **Actions to recognize National Holiday events**
 - Women's History Month (March)
 - Women's Equality Day (Aug 26)
 - Int'l Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Nov 25)
 - Others?
- Pending: **Town Halls** (virtual/in-person) to expand our reach and connections with women veterans
- **Reminder: University of AL's national survey: Women Who Served in the U.S. Military**
 - https://universityofalabama.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_251PoWVrR3ACyJn
 - **Still active!**

JUDICIARY

Mr. Michael Carrington, Chair

JUDICIARY



Name	Affiliation
Tammy Ferguson	Department of Corrections (DOC)
Michael Carrington (Chair)	Department of Corrections (DOC)
Richard Podguski	Department of Corrections (DOC)
Andrew Simpson	Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC)
Nicholas “Chip” Gilliland	Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (DMVA)
Lisa Grayson, Esq.	Cumberland Co. Courthouse, PA Bar Ass., Military and Veteran Affairs
Norman Marden	Office of the Attorney General
Jessica Penn-Shires	Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)
Ward Adams	Member at Large
Chief Joseph Daly	Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association (PCPA)
Lt. Dan Lynch	Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association (PCPA)

Department of Corrections (DOC)

Current Snapshot

- As of July 1, 2021, DOC has 2,326 *verified* veterans in custody which represents 6.2% of the incarcerated population. These numbers are gathered through the Veteran Reentry Search Service (VRSS) through the VA. There are likely many more veterans within the DOC that have yet to be identified.
- There are five (5) Veteran Service Units (hereafter "VSU") within the department; SCI Dallas, SCI Houtzdale, SCI Mercer, SCI Muncy (female), SCI Phoenix.
- Current VSU statewide bed capacity is approximately 554 (330 filled)
- There are approximately 7,000 veteran employees within the DOC and Pennsylvania Parole Board (PPB)

Department of Corrections

COVID-19 Updates

- COVID-19 continues to hinder veteran services within state facilities; however, state correctional institutions (SCIs) have allowed some programs and services, along with inmate visitation, to resume
- The VSUs are currently working to identify & place eligible veterans within their facilities back into the specialized units; however, they have been met with some resistance due to low morale and lack of program continuity during the pandemic
- Inmate transfers remain on hold for VSU placements at this time.
- DOC administration remains cautious during this “reopening period” as a 4th wave of COVID-19 now approaches

Department of Corrections

Agency Commitment to Veteran Services

- Agency approved five (5) new Veteran Coordinator/Unit Manager Positions in April 2021; One Manager per VSU who will directly manage and promote veteran services within that unit/facility for all veteran staff/inmates.
- Veteran Manager Positions were posted in June and received an incredible amount of well-qualified candidate submissions
- As of August 1, 2021, interviews were completed in four of the five VSU facilities; three of the selected candidates are in the processing phase and one candidate began her new position at SCI Mercer July 26, 2021.
- Once all of the VSU Managers are officially hired, group trainings will commence in order to ensure program fidelity and open lines of communication between SCIs, DMVA, VA, and additional community resources specific to veteran needs.

Department of Corrections

Short-Term Agency Goals

- Maintain and distribute the verified veteran's list to local coordinators on a quarterly basis
- Promote the Veteran Services initiatives to all incarcerated veterans and advocate for VSU placement in order to improve their reentry success
- Develop a plan to authorize VA approved contractors to enter state facilities for Compensation and Pension interviews/evaluations in order to ensure benefits are in place upon release
- Fill the VSU beds and establish waitlists for the veterans unable to immediately receive a bed due to max-capacity, behavioral issues, sentence status, or programming restrictions
- Train the newly hired VSU Managers and expand the Veteran Services provided to the inmates within the VSUs, in addition to the services provided to veteran staff members within the facilities

Department of Corrections

Long-Term Goals

- Ensure that all VSU/VSOs are offering veteran-specific programming and reentry services with a measurable degree of consistency and uniformity
- Reexamine the VSU placement checklist to ensure that all veterans can benefit from support services
- Work with newly appointed VSU managers, along with Veteran service support agencies, to update current DOC policy pertaining to veteran services
- Open additional VSUs within state and county facilities
- Assist in the expansion of Veteran's Courts
- Create a means of measuring success rates of VSU/VSO reentrants while participating within the institution as well as recidivism rates under field supervision.
- Allow staff & inmates involved in VSU/VSOs to temporarily transfer to high-functioning VSUs in order gain insight and personal experience that can be shared and implemented when returning to their parent institution



Are you an incarcerated veteran with verified military service, who is looking to be part of an all-veteran transitional housing unit specifically designed for veterans?

Are you 12-36 months from your minimum or release date, who has maintained a positive institutional adjustment record?

Are you a long-term incarcerated veteran looking for an opportunity to contribute to the veteran community as a peer facilitator and mentor?

Are you interested in obtaining all your entitled VA benefits as well as your DD-214, PA I.D. Card, Birth Certificate and Social Security Card?

Are you interested in learning more about the American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America, Vet Center, VFW and other veteran- related organizations?

Are you program compliant and willing to voluntarily participate in various re-entry workshops specifically oriented towards veteran's needs and services as you transition back into society?

The Department of Corrections currently offers Veterans Service Units (VSU's) in each region. If you are an incarcerated veteran who meets the minimum criteria and wants to volunteer for the VSU, please contact your Unit Management Team or your Facility Veterans Coordinator for additional information.

AOPC Update – Statewide Support in the Courts

- 1) 5th Annual Widener’s Veteran Services Virtual Event - “Access to Justice” (*AOPC co-sponsoring*)
 - Sept 17: Veterans in Prisons and Parole
 - Sept 24: Achieving Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Justice System
 - Oct 1: Efforts and Outreach by the Commonwealth
 - Registration: commonwealthlaw.widener.edu/eventregistration
- 2) Awareness Campaign - publications for MDJ offices (500+), county courthouses, county offices, etc. to address early identification, recruit mentors, connect with VJOs, and raise VTC awareness.
- 3) Improving AOPC’s communication and support for all VTC teams statewide. A mobile APP is under development and will rolled-out for the VTC teams this fall.
- 4) Supporting president judges and officials in counties looking for training, technical assistance, and exploring VTCs and other veterans programming. (Senate Bill 976 & Title 42 Section 916).
- 5) PA Association of Treatment Court Professionals (PATCP) Annual Conference October 13 - 15 at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center. Register at: <https://patcp.org>
- 6) Statewide data: www.pacourts.us/news-and-statistics/research-and-statistics
- 7) Visit us at: www.pacourts.us/judicial-administration/court-programs/problem-solving-courts

Committee Initiatives 2021

- Develop Instrument(s) to identify veterans from date of arrest (DOA), through the court systems, and (when applicable) to correctional institutions/community supervision.
- Expansion of Veteran Courts/Veteran Tracks/Veteran Service Units at the county level.
- Compensation & Pension (C&P) exams taking place within confined settings.
- Reporting measurable outcomes (program success/recidivism rates) from state and county veteran service programs/units.

NEW BUSINESS/ GOOD OF THE ORDER

PAARNG SUICIDE PREVENTION
PROGRAM

5K RUN FOR LIFE & RESOURCE EVENT

WHERE: MEMORIAL
LAKE FTIG

register @ www.eventbrite.com/e/run-for-life-tickets-162824092243



When: 10
SEP

For more info contact SFC Jose Lopez
@jose.n.lopez.mil@mail.mil
Lunch Will Be Provided

Recognition Dates for August

1 AUG – Air Force Day

4 AUG – Coast Guard Birthday

7 AUG – Purple Heart Day

10 AUG – US Dept of Defense Birthday

16 AUG – National Airborne Day

29 AUG – Marine Corps Reserve Birthday

DMVA WEBSITE: www.dmva.pa.gov

Sign up for the Veterans Registry and DMVA Digest!

www.register.dmva.pa.gov

NEXT MEETING:

November 3 at 1:00PM
Arrowheads Community Club
Bldg. 9-65, Fort Indiantown Gap
Annville, PA 17003