

Serving Those Who Served

The Official Newsletter of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs



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Greetings teammates,

Happy Holidays from the KDVA family! I hope you and your families had a great Thanksgiving holiday, and that it will carry over to wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year.

Although the year is closing out, your KDVA team still have a lot of work still to do. Fighting for veterans benefits and entitlements, running Christmas/Homeless Veterans clothing drives, hosting veteran residents holiday parties and much, much more. Later this month, our veteran cemeteries will be hosting volunteer wreath layers who will help place over 20,000-plus wreaths on veterans/veteran spouse graves at our five Kentucky state veteran cemeteries located in Hopkinsville, Radcliff, Williamstown, Greenup, and Hyden in support of National Wreaths Across America. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to our main Frankfort office or veteran state cemeteries. Also, if you want to send Christmas or holiday cards to our great veteran residents at our four veterans centers located in Hanson, Hazard, Radcliff and Wilmore, I encourage you to do so.

We have another great newsletter filled critical information for veterans and family members use, as well as great highlights of KDVA and Kentucky veteran activities and events from this past month. Articles include our Radcliff Veterans Center receiving the "Best of Kentucky in Nursing and Rehabilitation" Award,



Kentucky Entertainment Television's production of a Veterans Day Segment and our own Air Force Veteran Sherrie Davis for completing the Council of State Governments - South (CSG South) Staff Academy for Government Excellence

Again, on behalf of the KDVA team and families, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

See you into the new year! HOOAH!!!!

Very respectfully,

Commissioner Whitney P. Allen, Jr.
Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs

Latest VA News

Update on VA Home Loans

Helping Veterans and their families stay in their homes is a top priority at VA. Over the past year, we've been able to help more than 145,000 Veterans and their families retain their homes and avoid foreclosure. Even in the dynamic housing market of the last several years, rates of foreclosures of VA-backed mortgages are among the lowest in the country. And at the same time, we know that there are still Veterans struggling to make their payments.

To ensure these Veterans can stay in their homes, we are taking two steps:

1. We are calling on mortgage servicers to pause foreclosures of VA-guaranteed loans through May 31, 2024. During this pause we will work with servicers on workable home retention solutions for Veterans; and
2. We are extending the COVID-19 Refund Modification program through May 31, 2024. This extension will allow Veterans to obtain a zero-interest, deferred-payment loan from VA to cover missed payments and modify their existing VA-guaranteed loan to achieve affordable monthly payments for the duration of this extension.

By pausing foreclosures and extending the COVID-19 Refund Modification program, we can continue assisting Veterans with their loans while we launch our newest home retention option, the VA Servicing Purchase (VASP) program. Through VASP, VA will purchase defaulted VA loans from mortgage servicers, modify the loans, and then place them in the VA-owned portfolio as direct loans. This will empower us to work with Veterans experiencing severe financial hardship to adjust their loans – and their monthly payments – so they can keep their homes.

We want every Veteran with a loan to know that VA is here to help – and we encourage any Veteran who is struggling with making their payments to visit us at www.va.gov/housing-assistance or call us at 877-827-3702. We have loan technicians working with Veterans to help them stay in their homes, including discussing available home retention options such as repayment plans, special forbearance, loan modification, and more. And we will continue to actively review our portfolio of loans and work with loan servicers to do everything in our power to keep all Veterans and survivors with a VA-guaranteed mortgage in their homes.

Upcoming Events

Volunteers Laying Wreaths for Veterans ***Kentucky State Veteran Cemeteries***

Local residents, volunteers and state veteran cemetery employees will be laying wreaths at our five state veteran cemeteries over the course of December. The days, locations, and start times are scheduled below:

- **Kentucky Veteran Cemetery North East (Grayson, KY)** "Christmas Wreath Laying" December 2nd at 10AM.
- **Kentucky Veteran Cemetery South East (Hyden, KY)** "Laying of the Wreaths" December 9th at 9:30AM
- **Kentucky Veteran Cemetery North (Williamstown, KY)** "Wreaths for Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North" December 9th at 10AM
- **Kentucky Veteran Cemetery West (Hopkinsville, KY)** "Wreaths Across America" December 16th 11AM Central Standard Time
- **Kentucky Veteran Cemetery Central (Radcliff, KY)** "Wreaths Across America" December 16th at 10AM

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact your local state veteran cemetery.

Check out our Cemeteries Story Spectrum News Did

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/human-interest/2023/11/10/dedicated-caregivers-maintain-kentucky-s-veteran-cemeteries#>

Holiday Homeless Veterans Clothing Drive

Currently, hundreds of veterans are experiencing homelessness, and YOU can help.

Clothing Donations are accepted:
December 1st - December 15th

Accepting NEW items only for men and women
(Men: Size Extra Large, Women: Size Large)
Coats, Gloves, Beanies, Socks

Ship to: Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs
1111 Louisville Road, Suite B
Frankfort, KY 40601
ATT: Homeless Veteran Coordinator



What's New at KDVA?

Carl M. Brashear Radcliff Veterans Center Named Best of Kentucky in Nursing and Rehabilitation

Local, Senior Living Community Wins Prestigious Statewide Award

On Thursday, November 16, the Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities/Kentucky Center for Assisted Living (KAHCF/KCAL) honored the top long-term care facilities in Kentucky at their quality awards banquet. **Carl M. Brashear Radcliff Veterans Center** was honored to be a part of this elite group of leaders in the industry.

“We are honored to recognize these deserving providers at the top of their class,” said KAHCF/KCAL Interim President Ruby Jo Lubarsky, “During a tumultuous time of staffing shortages, our providers have faced these challenges with innovation and positivity. Each winner and their team have kept their residents’ quality of life at the heart of their work.” The Best of Kentucky – Nursing and Rehabilitation honorees must possess a CMS star rating of four or higher to apply.

“We are committed to serving Kentucky’s Veterans and serving those that have served.”

Long-term care providers attended the Annual Meeting & Expo, energized by general sessions challenging them with strategies to cope with stress on the job, hiring and retaining quality staff and regulatory issues. On November 15, KCAL held its “KCAL Day” for Assisted Living Communities. More than 100 vendors exhibited during the expo showcasing the latest innovations to providing quality care.



(Courtesy Photos)

Interment of Private First Class

Charles W. Wells



An interment ceremony was held at the Kentucky Veteran Cemetery Central in Radcliff for U.S. Army Private First Class Charles W. Wells on Nov. 16, 2023. Wells is a World War II veteran who was killed in action June 30, 1944 in the vicinity of Myitkyina, Burma.

Woman Veteran of the Year Monica Dean

Monica Dean has been selected as the Kentucky Woman Veteran of the Year 2023.

Monica Nicole Dean is a Senior Scrum Master at Infor and the Event Director for Lady Veterans Connect; Co-Founder Vet Connect. She served three years active duty in the U.S. Navy.

"I served in the Navy as an Aerographer's Mate where my daily tasks revolved around meteorology and oceanography," Dean said. "I was on Type 2 sea duty and when my assigned ship was in port, I would report to a shore command daily for training and prep to deploy. I was on several ships including the USS Makin Island (Amphibious carrier), USS John C. Stennis, and USS Abraham Lincoln. I deployed on my 21st birthday - July 19th, 2010, and set sail out to the middle east in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn."



During her time in the service Dean received two Flag letters of Commendation, a Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Navy & Marine Corps Achievement Medals, a Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and became Air Warfare Qualified.



Today, Dean continues to serve by serving veterans following her time in the Navy.

"I do a lot of work for several nonprofits serving veterans across the state including Lady Veterans Connect, Vet Connect, Athena's Sisters, and Active Heroes," Dean said. "I intend to bridge the divide between all the organizations in the state that serve this population. We each have our strengths and missions so we must come together to form an unbreakable bond and network to serve our community and do the real work that will help our siblings in arms who are struggling."

Upon being selected for the Woman Veteran of the Year, Dean feels this is a milestone and plans to keep moving forward.

"It's an honor and an affirmation in the work that I do for veterans with a focus on women veteran issues," Dean said.

Finally, Dean wants to convey the importance of looking out for one another and there are resources here in Kentucky for women veterans.

The Kentucky Veterans of the Year program is an initiative of the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana's signature veterans program, Operation Outreach. The Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana, in partnership with various community leaders, understood that veterans continue to make great contributions throughout their communities and wanted to ensure those veterans who "continue to serve" have the opportunity to be recognized and celebrated. —
kentuckyveteransoftheyear.org



Veterans Day of Valor

VRUCK Veterans Day of Valor in Paris, KY. The event consisted of various community speakers, parachute jumps, the Vietnam traveling walls, a recognition of all veterans.





**KDVA VBFR Sherrie Davis selected
to attend SAGE Class**



KDVA VBFR II Sherrie Davis, was selected to attend the 2023 SAGE Conference held in Atlanta, Ga. SAGE (Staff Academy for Governmental Excellence) is the nation's only regionally focused leadership development program for state government staff, and is known for providing exemplary leadership training. Sherrie learned leadership and communications skills and techniques to better collaborate with other leaders and coworkers.

The Grand of Prospect senior living Veterans Day Celebration





The Grand of Prospect senior living Veterans Day celebration and Veteran Wall dedication on Nov. 10, in Prospect KY. Family, friends, and staff gathered for a joyous occasion to celebrate veterans residents and veteran employees.

Congressman McGarvey's 1st Annual Veterans Day Breakfast



On Friday, November 10, Congressman Morgan McGarvey, held his 1st Annual Veterans Day Breakfast, a tribute to the extraordinary dedication and courage of Louisville veterans. This event was an opportunity to highlight the invaluable service of Louisville veterans, discuss his work in Congress on behalf of the men and women of the armed forces, and shared important information about the assistance and resources available for Veterans of the Commonwealth.

Postsecondary Education's 5th Annual Higher EDquity Symposium

Commissioner Allen and leading experts participated in Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education's 5th Annual Higher EDquity Symposium, on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at Eastern Kentucky University. Commissioner Allen and panelists discussed the importance of diversity in the workforce and how diversity in postsecondary education is important to accomplish this goal. Commissioner Allen served as the veteran workforce expert.



Commissioner Allen with AARP State Director Troy Broussard (Left) and AARP volunteer/Army veteran Gary Adkins after the panel.

Commissioner Allen and panelists answer questions from the moderator.



Supporting Kentucky Veterans: A KET Forum



KDVA leaders and staff participated in a KET Panel forum taping session which will air November 13, 2023. Panel members included Commissioner Whitney Allen, KDVA, Anyah Hoang-Ansert, vice president of VOA, Robbin Higgins, Governor's Advisory Board for Veteran Affairs, Dr. Katherine Marks, Commissioner for Behavioral Health, Developmental

and Intellectual Disabilities, and Eileen Ward, KDVA Homeless Veterans program manager.

Topics discussed include veteran concerns, mental health, employment and services to include homeless veteran program.

[KET Forums](#) | [KET](#)

Veteran Friendly Job Posting

Attention Veterans & Military Spouses:

The University of Kentucky Police Department is hiring!

Transition from the military to a civilian career with the University of Kentucky Police Department. They are an authorized U.S. Department of Defense SkillBridge Industry Partner. Everett Bracken (KDVA's Program Administrator) was honored to meet Police Chief Joe Monroe (University of Kentucky). Learn more about the UK Police Department: [Home](#) | [University of Kentucky Police Department](#)

[\(uky.edu\)](#)<https://police.uky.edu/>

[#TeamKentucky](#) [#veterans](#)

I Support Veterans License Plates



Who is eligible

Any owner of a noncommercial motor vehicle required to be registered for use on Kentucky Highways.

Steps Requirement

Application must be made at your local County Clerk's office. Upon receipt of this plate, your regular (special) issue license plate must be turned in or issued to another vehicle.

Decal Expires Customer's Birth Month

\$10.00 of the initial and \$5.00 of the renewal registration fee goes to the Kentucky Department of Veterans' Affairs. For more information, please visit <http://veterans.ky.gov> . This plate is available for personalization with an additional \$25.00 fee annually. Personalization is limited to a maximum of 5 characters.

Relevant KRS [186.162](#)

Useful VA Links

- **VA Housing Assistance Page** - Information about home loans, eligibility, interest rates reductions and other related topics: <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/>

- **National Center for PTSD** - Provides information and resources to veterans, care providers and organizations relating PTSD: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>
- **Covid-19 Vaccine Updates** - Latest updates on Covid-19 guidance and vaccinations: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>
- **VA Life Insurance (VALife)** - <https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp>
- **Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E)** - job training, education, employment coaching, etc.: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp>

Upcoming Veterans Dates and Events

- Civil Air Patrol (USAF Auxiliary) Birthday (**Dec. 1**)
- National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (**Dec. 7**)
- U.S. National Guard Birthday (**Dec. 13**)
- National Wreaths Across America (**Dec. 18**)

Resources for Veterans



Flood Relief

Have you been affected by flooding in Eastern Kentucky? The Governor's Office has prepared a list of resources designed to help you make it through this challenging time.

Click here for more information:
<https://governor.ky.gov/disaster-response/flood-resources>

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