

Serving Those Who Served

The Official Newsletter of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs



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Commissioner's Corner

Commissioner's Corner

Greetings teammates,

Since the start of the new year, the KDVA team has hit the ground running hard and fast. And I will tell you, there are no signs of us slowing down. February will be a critical time for the team as well as our Commonwealth's veterans. With the 2024 Assembly in session, there will be major budgetary and legislative decisions which will impact veterans' interests and lives. I hope you and your fellow veteran teammates take the time to engage our state legislators and policy makers to ensure they are creating good, effective bills and policies which will help our Commonwealth's veterans and their families.



Along with the Assembly session, KDVA has some big events lined up in the next 30 to 90 days. This includes a joint venture with VA's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP) entitled "A Veterans Forum" which take place on February 24, 2023, in Ashland, KY. The event coincides with our Homeless Veterans Standdown as well. On, March 2nd, our Women Veterans Program will host "She is a Veteran" event in Elizabethtown, KY. Those events will be followed by several regional events by our Office of Kentucky Veterans Services, so please be on the lookout for those dates/locations in our newsletter and social media platforms.

Finally, February is also Black History Month which honors the history and legacy of African Americansâ€™™ contributions to our Nation. I want to recognize our fellow African American veteran brothers and sisters for their service to our country, and their continuing service to our Commonwealth and their communities. I look forward in seeing you out in the community as well as veteran events around the Commonwealth.

HOOAH!!!!,

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

Latest VA News



VA provides free emergency suicide prevention care to nearly 50,000 Veterans and former service members in first year of new policy

In the first year of VAâ€™™s [new policy](#) allowing eligible Veterans and certain former service members in acute suicidal crisis to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for no-cost emergency health care, 49,714 Veterans and former service members have used this benefit â€” providing them with lifesaving care and saving more than \$64 million in health care costs.

This policy has helped prevent Veteran suicide by guaranteeing no cost, world-class care to eligible individuals in times of crisis â€” including emergency room care, inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days, outpatient care for up to 90 days, and transportation costs. The policy has also increased access to no-cost emergent suicide care for up to 9 million Veterans, because eligible Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system or go to a department facility to use this benefit.

Ending Veteran suicide is [VA's top clinical priority](#) and a key part of President Biden's [Unity Agenda](#). Since 2021, VA has worked aggressively to expand support for Veterans in crisis, including [launching the 988 \(then press 1\)](#) to help Veterans connect more quickly with caring, qualified responders through the Veterans Crisis Line; [partnering with community-based suicide prevention organizations](#) to provide Veterans with on-the-ground support; expanding [firearm suicide prevention efforts](#); and encouraging Veterans to reach out for help through a [national Veteran suicide prevention awareness campaign](#). Moving forward, VA and the [Biden-Harris Administration](#) will continue to work urgently to end Veteran suicide through a [public health approach](#) that combines both community-based and clinically based strategies to save lives.

“There is nothing more important to VA than preventing Veteran suicide” and this expansion of no-cost care has likely saved thousands of lives this year,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “We want all Veterans to know they can get the care they need, when they need it, no matter where they are.”

Any Veteran “enrolled in VA or not” can go to a VA or non-VA emergency room for no cost emergent suicidal care under this policy. Additionally, this benefit covers certain individuals who do not meet the requirements to be considered a Veteran, including those who were released from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable. It also covers service members “including reservists and national guard members” who served at least 100 days on active duty under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operation either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location. Veterans who experienced military sexual trauma while in uniform are also covered.

This benefit was created by the Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment (COMPACT) Act of 2020. Under this policy, eligible individuals receive:

- Emergent suicide care provided by, paid for, or reimbursed by VA.
- Expanded access and eligibility (Individuals do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit).
- Assurance that they will not be responsible for costs associated with emergency suicide care, including emergency transportation.
- Referral for appropriate VA programs and benefits they may be eligible for following the period of emergent suicide care.

To use this benefit, any eligible individual who is experiencing an emergency suicidal crisis should go to the nearest ER as soon as possible “transportation costs are covered by VA” and tell the ER staff that they are covered by this policy. The ER staff or someone acting on the individual's behalf should notify VA right away by calling 844-724-7842 (TTY: 711) or using [VA's Emergency Care Reporting \(ECR\) portal](#).

If an eligible individual receives a bill for community care after receiving emergency care during or after a suicidal crisis that they believe should be covered by VA, they should

contact VA's customer service center as soon as possible at 877-881-7618.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text 838255.

VA Secretary Denis McDonough visits Ft Campbell

VA Secretary Denis McDonough led a town hall meeting with Ft. Campbell Commanding General and Military Treatment Facility leadership regarding healthcare and benefits for active duty soldiers, many who are soon to separate from service. January 5, 2024.



Deaf 

988 IN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AVAILABLE 24/7



DIAL 988 ON YOUR VIDEOPHONE OR GO TO
WWW.988LIFELINE.ORG AND CLICK "ASL NOW" TO
CONNECT TO A TRAINED CRISIS COUNSELOR FLUENT IN ASL

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE



Upcoming Events



KDVA Veterans Claims Clinic

This is an opportunity for veterans and families to file claims for veterans disability compensation, non-service connected pensions, survivor benefits, healthcare, and educational benefits.

February 21, 2024
9:00 AM to 6:00PM

James Bruce Convention Center
303 Conference Dr.
Hopkinsville, KY 42240

PLEASE BRING

DD214

**MEDICAL
RECORDS**

**MARRIAGE
LICENSE**

**SOCIAL SECURITY
NUMBERS**



VA Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP)

Presents

“A Veteran’s Forum”

in collaboration with

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Saturday, February 24, 2024

9AM to 2:30PM

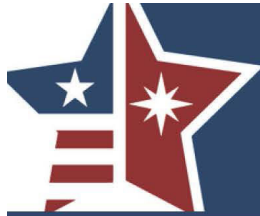
**Homeless Veterans Stand Down
concurrently from 1PM to 3PM,
with cold weather giveaways**

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
1930 Winchester Ave, Ashland KY, 41101
RSVP at 502-564-9203 or dwayne.edwards@ky.gov

Services

Benefits | Appeals | Education | Employment | Veteran Centers | State Veteran Cemeteries

Suicide Awareness and Lethal Means Safety 2024 Regional Summits



Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND LETHAL MEANS SAFETY

2024 REGIONAL SUMMITS

all taking place from 9am-3pm local time

February 27th, 2024

Central Kentucky

109 Grande Ave. Somerset, KY 42501

or

March 28th, 2024

Western Kentucky

8000 Cairo Rd Paducah, KY 42086

or

April 18th, 2024

Northern Kentucky

860 Dolwick Drive Erlanger, KY 41018

TARGET AUDIENCE

Family and friends of SMVF individuals, Community Leaders, Healthcare Professionals and Paraprofessionals

OUR VISION

Discussions and Insights

- Host a Lethal Means Summit
- Train providers on military, cultural competency, and counseling on access to lethal means

THE AGENDA

8:45a-9:00a
Arrival and Check-In

9:00a-9:10a
Welcome and Introductions

9:10a-10:00 a
Military Culture

10:10a-10:50a
Suicide Risk and Protective Factors

11:00a-11:50a
Lethal Means Safety Counseling

11:50a-1:15p
Lunch (on your own)

1:15p-1:30p
Welcome Back and Overview

1:35p-2:45p
Community Conversations (EKU)
Application of what we learned

2:45p-3:00p
Closure and Evaluations

Register by Scanning QR Code

Free



To register, please use the QR Code in the flier or use the button below. If you are having trouble registering with either click the link [here](#) instead.

Register Here

She is a Mom, She is a Wife, She is a Daughter,
She is a Friend, She is a Coworker...

"She is a Veteran"

Celebrating History of Women Veterans

Guest Speakers
2 Hour Painting Session
And more to come...



Save the Date

**March 2, 2024
9AM to 5PM**

**Hardin Post 113 1251 Ring Rd
Elizabethtown, KY, 42701**

You can RSVP on eventbrite [here](#).

If you're a woman veteran and would like to learn more about the program and events please join the private Kentucky Women Veterans Facebook Group pinned at the top of our Facebook Page. Click [here](#) to join.

HERE.IS.BETTER.

MOVIE SHOWING & PTSD AND SUICIDE AWARENESS TOPIC DISCUSSION

HOSTED BY
DAV CHAPTER 003
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*Pritchard Community Center
404 S Mulberry St, Elizabethtown, KY 42701*

**DATE: WEDNESDAY
MARCH 20, 2024**

TIME: 5:30 PM

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



Pritchard Community Center
404 S Mulberry Street, Elizabethtown, KY 42701

**Service Members, Veterans and Families Resource
Outreach Family and Friends of Veterans and Widows**

Community and Faith Based Leaders introduction to:
The Veteran Program Trust Fund

Focus on Benefits and services available to veterans and families

*Lunch will
be provided*



**Thursday March 21, 2024
9AM to 3PM**

**Whitley County
Williamsburg Tourism Center
650 South 10th Street
Williamsburg KY 40769**

What's New at KDVA?

**Honorable J. Michael Brown,
May 21, 1949 – January 12, 2024**

With heavy hearts, the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs wish to pay our respects to Honorable J. Michael Brown following his passing on January 12, 2024.

As Governor Beshear's Secretary of the Executive Cabinet, the Honorable Brown was one of the greatest advocates for Kentucky's veterans as well as an outstanding champion and leader to KDVA. As a veteran himself, he served as a paratrooper and infantry officer with the 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. After attending flight school, he later flew helicopters for the 101st Division in Ft. Campbell, KY. He concluded his service as a U.S. Army Captain.

Following his service in the military he practiced law and served in several roles of state and local government including the first African American named the Secretary of the Kentucky State Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, Deputy Attorney General, and Assistant Commonwealth Attorney, 30th Judicial District and first African American President of the Louisville Bar Association.

To his family and friends, we wish to express our upmost respect and deepest condolences.

His final resting place will be in the Evergreen Mausoleum, 4623 Preston Highway in Louisville, KY.



Quilts Of Valor Presented to Three WWII Veterans at Robin Brooke Senior Living



Wayne Hayes



Charles Owens



William Schaffrick

Disabled American Veterans Chapter and Auxiliary Unit 003, Elizabethtown Kentucky, wanted to honor three WWII Veterans with Quilts of Valor. There were several emails and phone calls that took place with the Kentucky quilts of valor committee for this event to take place on January 29, 2024.

A roomful of people, which included the Department of Kentucky State Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Commander Jane Casher, her husband Bob Casher, which is the Chapter Commander, along with many members of the Chapter as well as friends and families that honored three World War II veterans for their service with thoughtful and cozy gifts. At Robin Brooke Senior Living Elizabethtown Kentucky. The three veterans that were honored are members of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 003 and Auxiliary Unit 003.

According to Quilts of Valor group leader Marcella Goodin, the goal of the group is to provide quilts to retired veterans and active-duty soldiers. "The veterans are always so grateful that we are doing this for them," Goodin said. "They, especially the Vietnam veterans, thought everybody forgot about them, but we haven't."

Bob Casher, commander of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 003 in Elizabethtown, said it was incredibly heartwarming seeing three World War II veterans get recognition for their service. "It's overwhelming having three World War II veterans together at the same place at the same time," Casher said. "Words enough can't express how great it is."

The first quilt was awarded to William Schaffrick, who served in World War II from 1941 to 1946 as an infantry soldier in the U.S. Army. He was part of the Battle of the Bulge. Schaffrick said he was honored to receive the quilt, and discussed how they were all combat veterans of World War II that served on land, sea, and air.

"Of the three that are getting this quilt today, I'm the youngster, and it's been a long time in my life since I've been that in a group," Schaffrick said. "The Disabled American Veterans is truly a great organization that does a lot of good things for veterans, and I'm honored to receive it."

Schaffrick's son, Clint Schaffrick, was happy to see his father receive the quilt and said recognition for his service was long overdue.

Wayne Hayes was the second recipient of a quilt having served at the rank of E-4 in the U.S. Army including active Army National Guard (Reserves). Hayes said it was overwhelming getting the quilt for his service, and he was not sure how to express his feelings. "I thank these ladies so much for their needlepoint work," Hayes said.

The third recipient of a quilt was Charles Owens who served at the rank of E-4 from 1941 to 1946 assigned to the USS New Jersey Battleship. Owens said he also felt proud to receive the quilt for what he did during his service.

In addition to their quilts, each of the three soldiers received Certificates of Award with their name, branch of service and date they received their quilt.

They also were the first to receive hat pins from Casher to commemorate the DAV chapter's 100th anniversary, which will be celebrated April 13.

Women Veterans Outreach Event Hardin County

Dina Parrott, KDVA Women Veterans coordinator, did a women veterans outreach event in Hardin County, January 17, 2024. These outreach events allow women veterans to come together and connect with each other and discuss issues facing women veterans.

If you're a woman veteran and would like to learn more about the program and events please join the private Kentucky Women Veterans Facebook Group pinned at the top of our Facebook Page or click [here](#).



KY Veterans Higher Education Interest Survey

KDVA and the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) are interested in helping our veteran community understand their educational benefits. Research has shown that a workforce certificate or college degree can significantly increase your annual wages. Additionally, there are a number of programs to help veterans gain these types of certifications and degree programs. Your input will help us assist veterans across the state. Your feedback is very important.

Click on the button below or click [here](#) to participate in the brief survey.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Veteran_Survey

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](#)

Military Women's Memorial "Tell Her Story"



The Military Women's Memorial (MWM) is the only major national memorial honoring all servicewomen – past, present and future. The MWM honors more than 3 million women who served and continue to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces since the American Revolution.

Women's military service should be no less recognized than men's but historically the focus of history and preservation has been on men.

Why it's Important to Register?

EVERY STORY is important, EVERY STORY deserves to be told. Yet we have lost most of our WWI women veterans and our WWII women are fast coming to their final chapter. What history we have not recorded will be lost with them. We absolutely CANNOT let another generation go by without ensuring that our collective contributions are captured and remembered.

Please REGISTER HERE : www.womensmemorial.org

There is no cost to register! You can register any woman you know who is in or has served in the military. Let's keep HER-Story alive!

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

- Black History Month (**February**)
- National Freedom Day (**Feb 1**)
- Army Nurse Corp Established (1901)/ Groundhog Day (**Feb 2**)
- Marine Corps Women's Reserve Established (1943) (**Feb 13**)
- Coast Guard Birthday (**Feb 19**)
- President's Day (**Feb 20**)
- Iwo Jima Flag Raising (**Feb 23**)
- Persian Gulf Cease-Fire Day (**Feb 28**)

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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