



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

1822 W 122nd Street, Gardena, CA
90247 Phone: (310) 324-6161

October 2023

**GENERAL WILLIAM STARK ROSECRANS
VFW POST 3261**

It's not the dues you paid to be a member, it's the price you paid to be eligible.

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

I hope everyone has gotten their flu and updated Covid-19 vaccines. Holiday travel, especially at airports and hotels, can make you more vulnerable to the flu or COVID-19 so please stay safe.



James "Jimmy C" Carradine
Post Commander

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends:

"Everyone 6 months and older get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against the potentially serious outcome of COVID-19 illness this fall and winter. Updated COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna will be available soon [available now in some areas]. Vaccination remains the best protection against COVID-19 related hospitalization and death. Vaccination also reduces your chance of suffering the effects of Long COVID, which can develop during or following acute infection and last for an extended duration. If you have not received a COVID-19 vaccine in the past 2 months, get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect yourself this fall and winter."

The complete article is available at [cdc.gov/media/releases/2023/p0912-COVID](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2023/p0912-COVID).

Due to our monthly publishing cutoff date, you may notice that some articles appear in our newsletter later than the original release date of the source material. We will always ensure that all articles are still timely within the published period.

The last newsletter of the year will be the Nov/Dec newsletter closing out 2023.

Please go to vfw3261.org-Menu-News-and click on newsletter for all of the published newsletters for 2023.

**CANTEEN
OPEN MONDAY - SUNDAY
2 - 10 PM**

TRINA'S SUNDAY DINNER

Every Sunday 2-9 pm
Menu varies each Sunday

TACO TUESDAY 4-9 PM

- Tacos \$1.50
- (Asada & Chicken)
- Wet Burrito \$7.00
- (Asada or Chicken)
- Nachos \$5.00
- (Asada or Chicken)

BINGO WEDNESDAY

Open @ 4:30 pm
Starts at 6:30 pm

MENU

- Hot Dogs / Hamburgers
- Cheese Toast / Patty Melt
- Taco Salad / French Fries
- Desserts: Brownies & Pineapple Upside Down Cake

**RENT THE HALL FOR
YOUR NEXT PARTY OR
EVENT!**

(Capacity: 250 Persons)
Security Deposit is \$500
(Required to hold the date)

Friday & Saturday \$2,000
(Bar closes at midnight)



VA EXPANDS BURIAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON – VA announced that Veterans, and their families, caregivers, and survivors now have access to expanded burial benefits to help with end-of-life expenses related to a Veteran’s gravesite, burial, funeral and transportation of remains to their final resting place. Burial benefits are available to individuals who pay for a Veteran’s burial and funeral costs that are not reimbursed by any other organization. The updated burial benefits are:

- ◇ Expanded reimbursement of transportation expenses, to include costs for transporting remains, to state or Tribal Veterans’ cemeteries in addition to previously eligible national cemeteries.
- ◇ Instituted a more generous single payment rate for non-service-connected burial benefits.
- ◇ Extended the VA plot or interment allowance to Tribal organizations.

“Last fiscal year, VA delivered more than 84,000 burial benefits to families of Veterans,” said VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs. “Expanding burial benefits means we are able to ensure Veterans are honored in their final resting place, and assist their family, caregivers, and survivors during the difficult time of their loved one’s passing.”

VA provides burial benefits for all legal burial types, including cremation, burial at sea, and donation of remains to a medical school. Eligible individuals include a surviving spouse or legal partner, surviving child, parent or executor of the Veteran’s estate. Additionally, VA may pay burial benefits to a funeral home or third party who handled burial arrangements for a Veteran whose remains are unclaimed.

Veterans are encouraged to plan with end-of-life benefits provided by VA. These benefits include VA life insurance, care preferences, survivor benefits, and burial benefits that can be applied for in advance of a Veteran’s passing. Visit www.va.gov/plan-ahead to learn more.

There is no time limit to file for a service-connected burial, plot or interment allowance, or the transportation benefit. However, claims for non-service-connected burial benefits must be filed within two years of the Veteran’s burial or cremation. A non-service-connected burial benefit is one where the cause of death was not related to military service.

Learn more about [burial benefits \(https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/\)](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/) and additional information regarding [flags, headstones, and markers](#).

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>

The Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) service (formerly known as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, or "Voc Rehab"), in conjunction with the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), is proud to recognize the special observance with the theme of "Advancing Access and Equity: Then, Now and Next."

ODEP's theme for the Rehab Act's 50th Anniversary observance and the provisions in the act echo the mission of VR&E, which is committed to helping America's transitioning service members and Veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment barrier to prepare for, obtain and maintain suitable careers. It also provides employment resources and expertise, removes obstacles to employment, and provides independent living services and assistance.

Prior to the Rehab Act, people with disabilities had a hard time obtaining employment and education. Lawmakers looked at the barriers people with disabilities faced and realized that many were caused by the inability of some people in our society to see the capabilities of people with disabilities.

The Rehab Act extended and revised state vocational rehabilitation services and prohibited discrimination because of disability by federally funded and assisted programs, federal employers and federal contractors. It transformed the lives of people with disabilities and enhanced programs and services, such as VR&E.

This landmark law laid the foundation upon which the more comprehensive Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 now stands. By way of the ADA, the Rehab Act has been amended and become more robust. Both laws are important tools in the quest for people with disabilities to live full and productive lives, including in the areas of education, employment, reasonable accommodation, access to information and much more.

VR&E proudly celebrates laws like these, which aid in advancing access and equity for individuals with disabilities in the workforce, and employers in the non-profit, private and public sectors who have increased employment opportunities for service members and Veterans with disabilities. At the same time, we recognize that barriers to equal opportunity remain.

We will continue to work on making the promise of the Rehab Act and the ADA a reality to increase the employment of Veterans and enabling Veterans with disabilities to achieve their dreams and reach their full potential.



Sept. 26, 2023, marks the 50th Anniversary of the passage of the Rehabilitation Act (Rehab Act) of 1973, the first federal, civil rights legislation to address access and equity for people with disabilities.

To learn more about ODEP and the Rehabilitation Act, visit [ODEP's Rehabilitation Act 50 Years page](#).

To learn more about VR&E services, visit <https://www.va.gov/vre>.

SOURCE: <https://news.va.gov/124438/vre-celebrates-the-50th-anniversary-of-the-rehabilitation-act-of-1973/>

'This Scholarship Helped Me Achieve My Goals'

Following active duty, Air Force veteran Ely Esparza searched online for academic resources and found the VFW's *Help A Hero Scholarship*



Before making his way to Tucson, Arizona, Ely Esparza served four years in the Air Force.

"I joined because of my family's long military history and because it was a great opportunity for me to serve my country," he said.

Following active duty, Esparza searched online for academic resources and found the VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship." He was thrilled when he was awarded assistance.

"Thank you for this great opportunity," he said. "This scholarship has helped me achieve my goals and taken away so much financial stress, so I can focus solely on my schoolwork."

Esparza has hopes of becoming a college professor or working in some other role in higher education.

"I love the idea of learning, and I also love helping students and teaching," he said.

He is nearly finished earning his Ph.D. in educational psychology at the University of Arizona. In addition to financial

assistance, Esparza benefited mentally from the support as he worked toward his degree. He believes others could too.

"It provided such a psychological boost to keep going," he said. "If you're considering pursuing a higher education, just do it! There are so many resources on college campuses across the country – you'll never feel left out or on your own."

Learn more about the [VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."](https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2023/10/this-scholarship-helped-me-achieve-my-goals)

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2023/10/this-scholarship-helped-me-achieve-my-goals>

Jesse Joseph Peña was born on Jan. 9, 1949, the son of Alvino Henry Peña and Jane Marie Peña of Davenport, Iowa. He was born in Moline, Illinois, and graduated from Assumption High School in 1967. He attended Palmer Junior College and Black Hawk College before enlisting in the Navy on June 10, 1968, in Des Moines, Iowa.

Peña, a hospital corpsman, arrived in Vietnam on Oct. 4, 1969, where he was attached to Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division Reinforced Fleet Marine Force.

On Feb. 12, 1970, about five miles from Fire Base Ross, Company B's 2nd Platoon was moving in a column toward the east along a trail close to the south bank of the LyLy River when the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) caught the platoon in an ambush. The Marines came under fire from an enemy light machine gun to their front, then automatic weapons fire from the right. Coming out into a small paddy, they met small arms fire which quickly killed two of them and wounded another.

Other members of the platoon, including a staff sergeant and two Navy corpsmen, ran into the paddy to aid the first group and were themselves cut down. The rest of the Marines took cover at the edge of the trail and tried to bring rifle, M60 machine gun, and M79 grenade launcher fire to bear on the attackers. The NVA fired only when a Marine tried to move out into the paddy or otherwise broke cover, making it difficult for either platoon to find targets.

Reinforcements and supporting arms broke the deadlock. Company C was dispatched as a reaction force. The fighting continued most of the day when the enemy finally withdrew. At day's end, the Marines lost 13 men in the action, and another 13 required medical evacuation. Peña was one of the casualties, killed in action. He risked his own life to save others and was killed while providing aid.

Peña was posthumously promoted to HM3 and awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," which was subsequently upgraded to a Silver Star Medal, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action on Feb. 12, 1970.

Peña's brother, cousin, and an uncle served in the military; they're all buried at Rock Island National Cemetery, in Illinois. Peña's father, Alvino, had served 18 years in the National Guard and had tried to join the Army for a year to prevent Jesse from being sent to Vietnam. Alvino, the father of 10, wanted to take Jesse's place in Vietnam but was told he was too old.

We honor the Peña family's service and sacrifice.

SOURCE: <https://news.va.gov/124699/veteranoftheday-navy-jesse-joseph-pena/>



“Don’t Let Anything Stop You” STUDENT VETERAN SUPPORT PROGRAM



Army veteran Alyssa Parker encourages veterans to go to school so they can follow their dreams.

Alyssa Parker, 34, enlisted because she wanted to serve her country. She spent nearly five years in the Army, including deployments to Kuwait and Jordan.

After she left the military, Parker searched online for veteran tuition assistance and found the VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship.”

“Thank you for the support and for making it possible for me to attend graduate school without having to take out a bunch of loans,” she said.

Parker is working toward her master’s degree in global environmental policy at American University. She hopes to work for a nonprofit or in the government sector after graduation. She encourages other veterans to go to school so they can follow their dreams. “Do it,” she said. “Don’t let anything stop you from pursuing an education.”

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2023/10/dont-let-anything-stop-you>

STUDENT VETERAN SUPPORT PROGRAM

Today’s veterans can face any number of obstacles while furthering their education. Taking advantage of all the benefits you’ve earned and DESERVE shouldn’t be one of them! This is why we have teamed up with Student Veterans of America and Sport Clips Haircuts to provide the assistance you need.

Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarships [VFW “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship.”](#)

The VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” provides service members and veterans with the financial assistance they need to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. It’s just another way for us to say “thank you” to those who fought for our freedoms.

SCHOLARSHIP DETAILS:

- Scholarships of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to qualified applicants.
- Awarded scholarships are limited to one per family per semester.
- Applications for the fall semester will be accepted Jan. 1 through April 30.
- Applications for the spring semester will be accepted Aug. 1 through Nov. 15.
- Fall semester scholarships will be awarded in August, and spring semester scholarships will be awarded in January.
- Scholarships must be used by the end of the school semester for which the veteran is applying or they will become null and void.
- Scholarships are restricted for tuition and fees only and will be paid directly to accredited schools.

(Cont. on page 7)

Don't Let Anything Stop You" STUDENT VETERAN SUPPORT PROGRAM (Cont. from pg. 6)

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS MUST:

- Be a citizen of the United States.
- Be retired, honorably discharged, active duty, or a member of the National Guard or Reserve.
- Have completed Basic Training and follow-on training (Advanced Individual Training, technical school, etc.).
- Separated with or currently hold a military rank of E-5 or below.
- Demonstrate a need for financial assistance.
- Participate in, be accepted to or currently enrolled in a VA-approved program or school at an accredited post-secondary institution.
- If you have questions please [view our FAQ](#) or [email us](#) with additional questions.

Student Veteran Support Grant

The VFW recognizes that both funding and support for our student veterans and dependents at institutions of higher learning, can often be difficult to find. The **VFW's Student Veteran Support Grant** offers much needed assistance to support specific student veteran events. The grant, administered by the VFW Washington Office, focuses on supporting the overall student veteran population within the community, which consists of many student veterans at campuses across the country that are not affiliated with an SVA chapter. The grants will be disbursed to a VFW Post or Department that has submitted an application, to support the student veterans at the university or college.

Grant Eligibility:

- Applicants must be VFW members associated with an appropriate entity of the VFW (VFW Post, District, Department, or National).
- Appropriate VFW Post, District, Department, or National leadership serve as the convening authority on the grant request and is responsible for receiving funds.
- Funds must be utilized for events and outreach designed to assist and support veterans currently enrolled in institutions of higher learning.
- Grants may be awarded up to \$500 to support each event, and grants can be awarded to a VFW entity twice each fiscal year, totaling up to \$1,000.

Apply Today



SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!

Sport Clips is a proud supporter of the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program. Support those who support us by visiting your local Sport Clips store **today. [Find your store](#)**

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>

EVERY OCTOBER, SPECIAL EMPHASIS IS GIVEN TO THE AWARENESS OF BREAST CANCER

This movement is intended to inform people of the risks of breast cancer as well as what can be done to prevent and/or address it. Several organizations work to promote breast cancer awareness to both educate the public and provide support to the diagnosed.

History of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

[National Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#) was officially founded in 1985. It began as a partnership between the American Cancer Society and Imperial Chemical Industries. Today, it involves many charities that all work together to support the same goal. In 1993, the Breast Cancer Research Foundation was founded by Evelyn Lauder and the pink ribbon was officially adopted as the symbol for National Breast



Cancer Awareness Month. In addition to the ribbon, the color pink is also used heavily during this time and is often used by businesses, organizations, sports teams, and more to show support.

Importance of Early Detection

Breast cancer is progressive and this is why [early detection](#) is so important. If breast cancer is detected in the

early stages, an individual's likelihood of a cure and survival. In the later stages, this chance drops significantly, especially if the breast cancer has already reached the lymph nodes. Many women do not know the signs of breast cancer and aren't aware there is a problem until it's too late. Women need to understand their risks as well as the early signs, so they can catch breast cancer early on.

Know Your Risk

Several factors put people at risk. While breast cancer is found in men, it is far more common in women, and being female significantly increases your risk. Women are also at risk as they age. Reproductive history also plays a role. Starting your period before age 12 and reaching menopause after age 55 means your body is exposed to hormones longer and this increases your risk. You also are at risk if there is a history of breast cancer in your family as well as a history of genetic mutations that put people at risk. While there are a lot of risks you have no control over, there are some that you do. Losing weight, exercising more often, reducing your exposure to hormones (such as through medications), and reducing your alcohol intake can all reduce your risk of developing breast cancer.

EVERY OCTOBER, SPECIAL EMPHASIS IS GIVEN TO THE AWARENESS OF BREAST CANCER

(Cont. from page 8)

Get Screened

If you're worried about breast cancer, the best thing you can do for yourself is to get screened. Screenings allow you to check for the signs of breast cancer. This allows you to detect it early and begin addressing it before it gets worse. For women aged 40 and older, it's recommended to receive a mammogram once every one to two years. For women aged 30-39, it's recommended that you speak with your doctor about your potential risk. One of the primary goals of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is to promote mammograms and the importance of getting screened.

Support Others

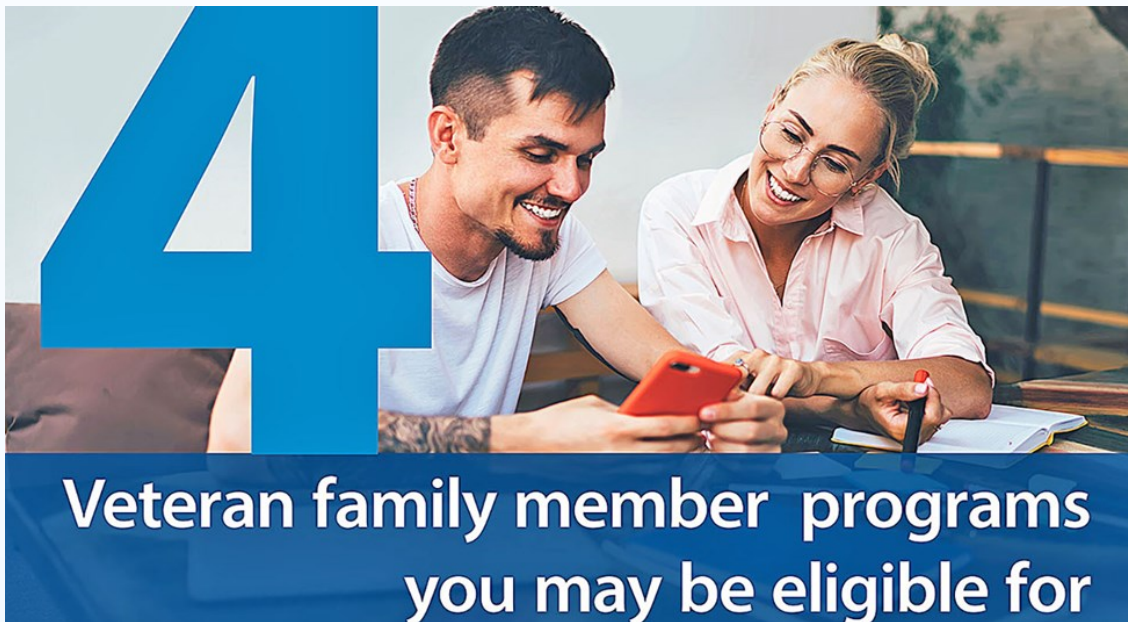
During the month of October, you can show your support for those who are going through breast cancer. Many charities and other organizations sponsor events and activities to help boost awareness and show support. Examples might include marathons to promote awareness. You can also help to spread information about breast cancer and help improve the population's education about it. If you know someone going through breast cancer, ask them what help they need. You can drive them to appointments, visit with them, and even make care packages for them. Donating your time, money, and helpful items is also a great way to support National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Spreading awareness is an important step in reducing the number of women who experience breast cancer. They need to be aware of the risks and warning signs of breast cancer, so they can detect it early on. Participate in National Breast Cancer Awareness Month during this October and help spread information and support.

GETTING SCREENED EARLY CAN HELP REDUCE YOUR RISK OF BREAST CANCER

SOURCE: <https://premierfamily.net/october-is-national-breast-cancer-awareness-month/>





Did you know some Veterans and their family members have access to VA-covered care through several special programs such as the Civilian Health and Medical Program of VA (CHAMPVA)?

More than 700,000 beneficiaries (spouses and children) are eligible to receive specific types of care and services through four family member-focused VA programs:

- CHAMPVA
- Camp LeJeune Family Member Program (CLFMP)
- Children of Women Vietnam Veterans (CWVV)

Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program (SBHCBP).

There are many Veterans and eligible beneficiaries who are not taking advantage of these services that are covered by VA. To get access, you first need to determine if you are eligible for one of the programs. The four health care benefit programs for Veterans' family members and dependents (beneficiaries) are based on certain conditions and eligibility requirements.

Civilian Health and Medical Program of VA (CHAMPVA)

What: VA shares the cost of covered health care services for those who are eligible under this program.

Who is eligible for CHAMPVA? A spouse, children of a Veteran, or surviving beneficiaries of a Veteran who is rated permanently and totally disabled for a service-connected disability or who was at the time of death eligible for CHAMPVA. Find out more about the program: [CHAMPVA eligibility](#).

How to apply: Complete and mail in the [CHAMPVA application form](#) and [Other Health Insurance certification form](#). If you have Medicare, send a copy of your Medicare card. At this time VFMP cannot take electronic form submissions. Check back on the [How to Apply for CHAMPVA](#) webpage.

Cont. on page 11)

4 VETERAN FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAMS YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR

(Cont. from pg. 10)

Mail Forms to: VHA OFFICE OF INTEGRATED VETERAN CARE
CHAMPVA ELIGIBILITY
PO BOX 469028
DENVER, CO 80246-9063

CHAMPVA Help Line: 800-733-8387, open 8:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. ET Monday through Friday.

For more information on CHAMPVA: View this [CHAMPVA Fact Sheet](#) or visit the [CHAMPVA website](#).

Camp Lejeune Family Member Program (CLFMP)

What: VA shares the cost of covered health care services for certain conditions for family members of Veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune, Aug. 1, 1953, through Dec. 31, 1987, and exposed to contaminated drinking water.

Who is eligible for CLFMP: Family members (spouse or dependent) of Veterans who lived or served at the Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, between Aug. 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987, and were potentially exposed to contaminated drinking water. You must have lived at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more during this time.

How to apply: [Apply online](#) (select “Start New Application for Family Member” near the bottom of the page) or fill out this [CLFMP application form](#).

If filling out a paper application, you can fax to (512) 460-5536. Mail forms to:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Financial Services Center
PO BOX 149200
Austin, TX 78714-9200

For more information on CLFMP: Visit the [Camp Lejeune Family Member Program](#) webpage. For questions about the applications, call 866-372-1144.

Children of Women Vietnam Veterans Health Care Benefits Program (CWVV)

What: VA provides health care benefits to biological children of women Vietnam Veterans who the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) determined have a covered birth defect. The CWVV is not a comprehensive health care plan. This program pays for health care services necessary for treating those with a covered birth defect and associated medical conditions.

Who is eligible for CWVV: Children whose biological mother is a Vietnam Veteran and who were conceived after the date the Veteran entered the Republic of Vietnam (period beginning Feb. 28, 1961, and ending May 7, 1975), and who have one of the covered birth defects as determined by VBA.

(Cont. on page 12)

4 VETERAN FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAMS YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR

(Cont. from pg. 11)

Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program (SBHCBP)

Overview: VA provides monetary allowances, vocational training and rehabilitation, and VA-financed health care benefits to certain Korea and Vietnam Veterans' birth children who have been diagnosed with spina bifida.

How to apply: Contact the Denver VA Regional Office at 303-914-2900 or by email to BDEFECTS.VBADEN@va.gov.

Who is eligible for SBHCBP: Children of a Vietnam or Korean War era Veteran who have been diagnosed with spina bifida.

For more information on SBHCBP: Visit the [Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program \(SBHCBP\)](#) webpage.

Reinforcing VA's commitment to care

VA aims to give Veterans peace of mind by caring for their eligible beneficiaries. Our goal is to continue to simplify access to care while fostering a holistic approach to delivering excellent care for Veterans and eligible family members. VA is committed to assisting beneficiaries in making informed decisions about their care options and maximizing their available benefits.

Support and resources

[Information for Family Members and Dependents – Community Care \(va.gov\)](#)

[Locating a Provider – Community Care \(va.gov\)](#)

[Camp Lejeune Family Member Program – Community Care \(va.gov\)](#)

va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/pubs/forms.asp

SOURCE: <https://news.va.gov/124739/va-provides-care-to-eligible-family-members/>

VA Expands Burial Benefits for Veterans and their Families

WASHINGTON — VA has announced that Veterans, and their families, caregivers, and survivors now have access to expanded burial benefits to help with end-of-life expenses related to a Veteran's gravesite, burial, funeral and transportation of remains to their final resting place. Burial benefits are available to individuals who pay for a Veteran's burial and funeral costs that are not reimbursed by any other organization. The updated burial benefits are:

- Expanded reimbursement of transportation expenses, to include costs for transporting remains, to state or Tribal Veterans' cemeteries in addition to previously eligible national cemeteries.
- Instituted a more generous single payment rate for non-service-connected burial benefits.
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"Last fiscal year, VA delivered more than 84,000 burial benefits to families of Veterans," said VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs. "Expanding burial benefits means we are able to ensure Veterans are honored in their final resting place, and assist their family, caregivers, and survivors during the difficult time of their loved one's passing."

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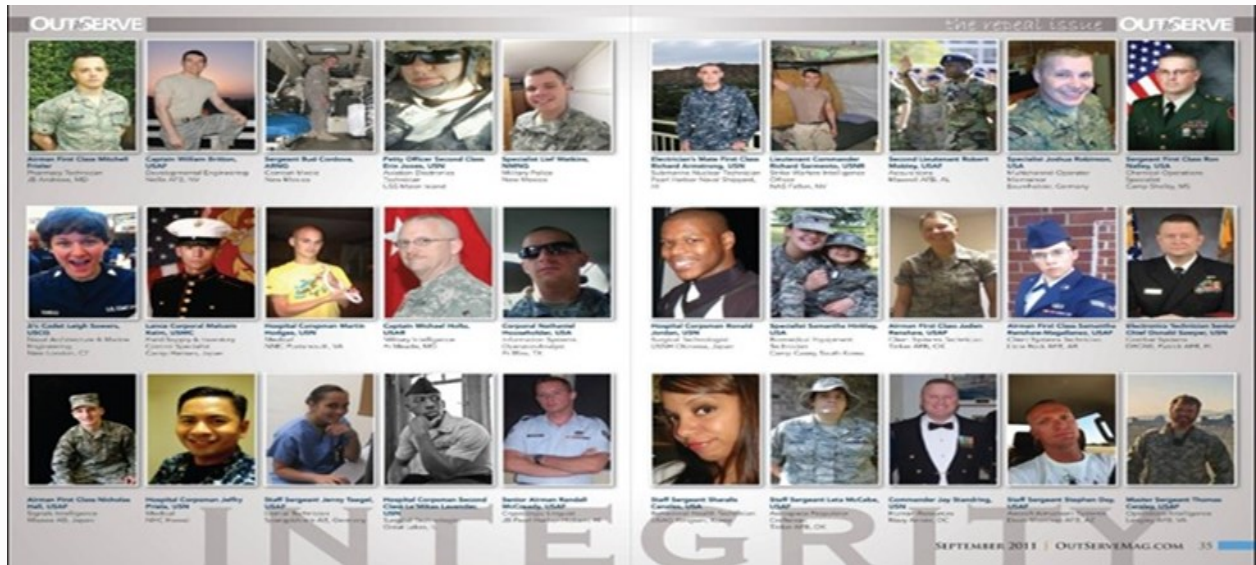
Veterans are encouraged to plan with end-of-life benefits provided by VA. These benefits include VA life insurance, care preferences, survivor benefits, and **burial benefits that can be applied for in advance of a Veteran's passing**. Visit www.va.gov/plan-ahead to learn more.

There is no time limit to file for a service-connected burial, plot or interment allowance, or the transportation benefit. However, claims for non-service-connected burial benefits must be filed within two years of the Veteran's burial or cremation. A non-service-connected burial benefit is one where the cause of death was not related to military service.

Learn more about **burial benefits** (<https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/>) and additional information regarding) **flags, headstones, and markers**.

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>

TWELVE YEARS LATER—REPEAL OF DON'T' ASK-DON'T TELL



I kept refreshing my browser, over and over, as midnight approached on September 19, 2011. At 12:01 AM, the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” would be official—and a [collector’s edition of OutServe Magazine](#) would be published online. The OutServe headline “101 Faces of Courage” was apt, as it featured pictures of active duty gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members in uniform, with their full names and duty stations, emphasizing the story that yes, thousands of LGB* Americans were already serving with honor.

Finally, the moment came, and the strong, proud faces of uniformed service members filled my screen. And tears filled my eyes.

I left the Army in 1986. A 1980 West Point graduate, I’d been a successful platoon leader, staff officer and company commander. But I gave up the Army—and my dream of returning to the Academy to teach—because I couldn’t risk being discovered as a lesbian. I’d already lived through one “witch hunt,” where senior officers interrogated almost every woman on our post in West Germany asking for names of gays and lesbians. I saw firsthand the waste of talent as the Army lost not just gays and lesbians, but women falsely accused of homosexuality because they wouldn’t date a senior NCO or officer.

Years later, I joined legions of Veterans, advocates and the brave but anonymous active duty members of [OutServe](#) to fight for, and win, the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

The day after the repeal, tens of thousands of LGB service members went to work in a different world. They could finally put a picture of their significant other on their desk at work. They could finally answer the question “What did you do over the weekend?” without demurring. And yes, they could be honest about their lives, for the first time without fear of losing their jobs.

(Cont. on page 15)

TWELVE YEARS LATER—REPEAL OF DON'T ASK-DON'T TELL

(Cont. from page 14)

The repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” was a rousing success for the U.S. Armed Forces. The naysayers had predicted everything from bathroom terrors to deaths on the battlefield, but none of it came to be. As the U.S. Military Academy Sergeant Major told the West Point Board of Visitors in 2012, “We braced for impact—and it wasn’t even a speed bump.” Gay, lesbian and bisexual service members continued to serve with honor and courage.

Sadly, that number included [Army Corporal Andrew Wilfahrt](#) and [Army Staff Sergeant Donna Johnson](#), both killed fighting in Afghanistan in the year after repeal.

Today, 12 years later, we have proud LGBTQ Veterans like retired Army Major General [Tammy Smith](#), Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs [Anthony Woods](#), and former Under Secretary of the Air Force [Gina Ortiz-Jones](#). Not to mention those of us who work here at VA, including OutServe “alumni” Jon Mills, Ashley Carothers, Justin Dailey, Josh Seefried and Bobat Camacho.

At VA, we strive to ensure that all Veterans—ALL Veterans—feel welcomed and respected. That’s why we fly the rainbow flag during Pride Month in June. Designed by Army Veteran Gilbert Baker to represent the full range of humanity, the flag sends a message to everyone who served that VA is here for you.

We know that LGBTQ Veterans include many who continue to serve our nation beyond their military service, like those mentioned above. We also recognize that among those LGBTQ Veterans are those who were discharged just for being gay or lesbian, many with discharges less than honorable.

But that’s not the last word at VA: If you file a claim or apply to enroll in VA health care, but don’t have an honorable discharge, VA will AUTOMATICALLY initiate a Character of Discharge Review. We’ll reach out to your branch of service for the documents related to your discharge, and we’ll ask you to send us any documents you may have. We’ve undertaken tens of thousands of reviews, and in over 70% of cases, we find that you are [eligible for some level of VA care and/or benefits](#).

We have two important messages for our LGBTQ Veterans: One, thank you for your service, your courage, and your integrity. And two, COME TO VA. We will do everything we can to deliver the care and benefits you’ve earned and so richly deserve. Give us a chance to fight for you, as you fought for us.

*Not “T” – transgender service remained banned until 2016.

SOURCE: <https://news.va.gov/124195/twelve-years-later-repeal-dont-ask-dont-tell/>

VFW POST 3261 OFFICERS



**1822 W 122nd Street
Gardena, CA 90247**

**Phone: (310) 324-6161
www.vfw3261.org**

Commander – James "Jimmy C" Carradine

Senior Vice Commander – Anthony Dixon

Junior Vice Commander - Larry "Skip" Anglin

Quartermaster – Norman "Norm" Chibana

Chaplain - Michael J. McArdle

1st Year Trustee – Robert J. Galda

2nd Year Trustee – Elvin Carter

3rd Year Trustee – Patrick F. Tubal

Adjutant – Norman "Norm" Chibana

Service Officer – Larry "Skip" Anglin

Judge Advocate – Michael McArdle