



County of Albany Veterans Service Bureau Newsletter

August-October 2020

Daniel P. McCoy
Albany County Executive
Kenneth Secor
Director



Services for Veterans

Albany County Veterans Service Bureau provides information on the various Veterans benefits. We aid veterans and their families with various county, state, and federal entitlements such as:

- Disability, pension, and/or compensation benefits
- Burial allowances, head stones, and flags
- Educational benefits
- Upgrading military discharges
- Obtaining copies of discharges & medical records
- Job referrals
- Return the FAVOR cards

Message from the Director

It has been quite the year so far. I hope you and your families have remained safe and healthy during this very trying time.

If you feel these past few months of stress and isolation has affected your mental well-being, there are resources available. Two great resources are the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255 press 1 or <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>) and the Albany County Mobile Crisis Team (518-549-6500 or <https://www.albanycounty.com/mentalhealth>). September is Suicide Awareness month so we will be including some information regarding mental health and suicide prevention.

Our office is almost back to regular operations. The box directly to the left is a list of some of the services we provide. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns regarding Veteran benefits or resources. We will also resume regular publication of this newsletter.

Provided state guidance doesn't change, we will re-start the monthly Honor A Veteran program soon. The committee is carefully reviewing all guidance and more information will be put out when a final decision is made. If you would like to submit a Veteran for consideration, please contact us or use the links on the next page in the Honor A Veteran section.

In this issue we will discuss VA Flu Clinic, mental health, the Vet Center, companion/comfort pets, job and apprenticeship opportunities, and updated visitor policy for the Albany VA Medical Center.

Thank you to all Veterans for your service and families for their support.

Veteran Organizations Reopening

Several Veteran organizations within the county have started to reopen or resume meeting. You can contact them to find out for sure. If you need contact information, a link to them is available on page 4 of this newsletter.

2020 Flu Clinic at Albany VA Medical Center

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year's flu clinic will be conducted by appointment only. Walk-ins will not be accepted due to newly enhanced safety precautions. You may begin scheduling your flu shot on Monday September 21st by calling 518-626-PACT(7228). The flu clinic will be located on the first floor near the back elevators.



The Veterans Crisis Line connects Service members and Veterans in crisis, as well as their family members and friends, with qualified, caring VA responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text-messaging service.

This Free support is:

- Confidential
- Available every day, 24/7

And serves:

- All Veterans
- All service members
- National Guard & Reserve
- Family members & friends

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

162 Washington Ave, Albany, New York 12210 | (518) 447-7710 | FAX (518) 447-7714
www.AlbanyCounty.com/veterans

ALBANY COUNTY
Cares about our veterans



Return The F.A.V.O.R. Discount For Veterans

Return the F.A.V.O.R. (Find & Assist Veterans of Record) is a merchant discount program for eligible Albany County Veterans. The program provides veterans with a discount on services or purchases at participating merchants.

Veterans can enroll by bringing their DD-214 to the Albany County Veterans Service Bureau office Monday through Friday 9am to 4pm. Please call for an appointment to ensure availability and timely service.

Return the FAVOR ID application form can be downloaded at:

<http://www.albanycounty.com/veterans>



Albany County Honor A Veteran Program

Each month Albany County honors a deceased Veteran with a ceremony at various locations throughout the County that includes a County Proclamation presented to the Veteran’s family and the raising of an American flag that was flown over our Nation’s Capitol in tribute to the honored Veteran.

Anyone (family, friends, funeral directors, veterans groups, etc.) may submit nomination form and resume for consideration.

For nomination information, process, & criteria, please visit our webpage at:

<http://www.albanycounty.com/veterans>

VA Guidance on Eligibility of Mental Health Care for Veterans with Other-than-Honorable Discharges

In 2017, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) increased access to mental health care for prior military members who received any form of administrative separation from military service. This eligibility for mental health care extends to certain individuals whose character of discharge prevents them from receiving other VA benefits or healthcare.

- In 2017, Secretary Shulkin formalized these policies using the powers conferred under 38 C.F.R. 17.34 and 38 U.S.C 1702 to provide increased mental health care access to those who served in the U.S military and received an Other-Than-Honorable (OTH) discharge.
- In 2017, the President of the United States signed into law the Honor Our Commitment Act (38 USC 1720I), ensuring that the VA would provide mental health services and behavioral health services for veterans who received a General Under Honorable Conditions or Other-Than-Honorable (OTH) discharge, and who either served in combat, operated drones in combat functions, or were victims of sexual trauma during their military service.
- Former service members with an OTH administrative discharge may receive care for their mental health emergency for an initial period of up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential or outpatient care.

Please see VHA Directive 1601A.02, Appendix E for the full directive at the following link:

https://www.va.gov/VHAPublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=8908

Vet Center

These are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services to eligible Veterans, active duty service members, National Guard and Reserve, and their families. Readjustment counseling is offered to make a successful transition from military to civilian life or after a traumatic event experienced in the military. Individual, group, marriage and family counseling is offered in addition to referral and connection to other VA or community benefits and services. Vet Center counselors and staff, many of whom are Veterans, are experienced and prepared to discuss the tragedies of war, loss, grief and transition after trauma.

More information can be found at <https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>



Important Documents & Information When Applying for Benefits

- Honorable Discharge from the Armed Forces or Report of Military Separation (DD-214)
- Record of Marriage
- Birth certificate or adoption papers for dependent children
- Death Certificate of Veteran & any previous spouse
- Divorce Papers
- Veterans social security number
- Department of Veterans Affairs claim or file number
- Annual family income information (wages, retirement, interest, etc.)

All Documents listed above may be copied, except for the DD-214, which must be a certified copy.

Veterans Service Officers (VSO)

Albany County Veterans Service Bureau has three American Legion certified VSO's to assist Veterans with benefits.

- Ken Secor, SGM (Ret)
- Mike Good, SGM (Ret)
- Jim Ader, SGT (Ret)

(518) 447-7710 or email at veteransbureau@albanycountyny.gov

Albany County Mobile Crisis Team

Psychiatric crisis services are available 24/7 at the CDPC Crisis Unit and from the Mobile Crisis Team.

Call (518) 549-6500

<https://www.albanycounty.com/mentalhealth>

Veterans' Pet Support Project

Companion animals have a positive and enriching impact on our lives. Together, Mohawk Hudson Humane Society and Tri-City Rentals are committed to helping Veterans adopt and care for their pets by providing high-quality care and support services.

More information is available in the flyer at the end of this newsletter or at <https://mohawkhumane.org/>.

AUSA Jobs Central

AUSA announced their new Jobs Central. They know that transitioning between Military and civilian jobs can be extremely stressful. AUSA has new ways to help their members write polished resumes, find the right jobs, and advance careers.

Visit AUSA Jobs Central to:

- Search and apply for jobs at organizations that value your credentials.
- Upload your anonymous resume: employers can contact you, but you maintain control and choose who gets your information.
- Receive an alert every time a job is announced that matches your personal profile, skills, interests, and preferred location(s).
- Access resources like MOS translators, pay calculators, resume tips, job interview tips, and more.
- Get a free resume review and critique.

It's not too soon to start today at ausa.org/JobCentral.

Find Apprenticeship Opportunities Near You

A new [VETS Apprenticeship Program](#) assists transitioning Veterans and spouses define a post-service career path. Apprenticeships connect talented workers with employers and networks in their desired industries and post-service locations. Learn how to gain paid, relevant workplace experience, classroom instruction and a nationally recognized credential.

Free Stuff!

Free Quarantine Craft Kits from Help Heal Veterans
Being in quarantine can get lonely and boring. VA has teamed up with Help Heal Veterans to deliver quarantine kits to help keep Veterans occupied and entertained. The kits contain reading and educational materials, craft supplies, and materials that can be used to help Veterans create their own face masks. Learn more at [VA Teams With Nonprofit To Provide Craft Kits To Veterans](#)





New York State Military Museum

The museum houses over 10,000 artifacts dating from the Revolutionary War to Desert Storm that relate to New York State's military forces, the state's military history and the contributions of New York's veterans. The artifacts include uniforms, weapons, artillery pieces, and art.

There is no admission charge to visit the museum or use research center.

61 Lake Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY, 12866
(518) 581-5100
<http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/mil-hist.htm>



Operation At Ease

Operation at Ease takes dogs from shelters, pairs them with deserving veterans and first responders and provides a free guided training program for post traumatic stress and light mobility service dogs. Helping Veterans, saving dogs, changing lives.

PO Box 9156, Schenectady, NY 12309
(518) 847-9941
<https://www.operationatease.org>



Patriot Guard Riders New York

PGRNY is a diverse group of patriots who come together to show respect and support to US service members, veterans, first responders who die in the line of duty, and their families by standing flag lines and providing escorts at memorial services, only at the request of the family. We also stand flag line for other events honoring veterans and military personnel by request.

PO Box 637
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
(585) 866-1747
<https://pgrny.org>

RESOURCES

- [Albany Housing Coalition](#)
- [ARTS4VETS / Support our Troops Committee](#)
- [Battlefield & Beyond](#)
- [Capital District Women Veterans](#)
- [Military Family Foundation](#)
- [Military One Source](#)
- [National Resource Directory \(NRD\)](#)
- [NY Connects](#)
- [NYS Division of Military & Naval Affairs](#)
- [NYS Division of Veterans Services](#)
- [NYS Industries for Disabled \(NYSID\)](#)
- [NYS Military Museum](#)
- [Operation At Ease](#)
- [Patriot Flight Capital Region NY](#)
- [Patriot Guard Riders New York](#)
- [Rolling Thunder New York 5](#)
- [Saratoga Nat Cemetery Honor Guard](#)
- [Soldier On](#)
- [STRIDE Adaptive Sports](#)
- [Team RWB](#)
- [The Legal Project](#)
- [Veterans Business Outreach Center \(VBOC\)](#)
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#)
- [Veterans & Community Housing Coalition](#)
- [Veteran Connect Center \(VCC\)](#)
- [Veterans Miracle Center](#)
- [Warriors Haven](#)
- [US Department of Veteran Affairs \(VA\)](#)

- [VA/DoD/eBenefits](#)
- [VA/Saratoga National Cemetery](#)
- [VA/Stratton VA Medical Center](#)
- [VA/Vet Center](#)
- [#HicksStrong](#)

VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS

- [American Gold Star Mothers](#)
- [American Legion](#)
- [American Legion Ruane Post 476](#)
- [American Legion Helderberg Post 977](#)
- [American Legion Blanchard Post 1040](#)
- [American Legion Colonie Post 1256](#)
- [American Legion Voorheesville Post 1493](#)
- [American Legion Zaloga Post 1520](#)
- [American Legion North Albany Post 1610](#)
- [AmVets NYS Capital District Post 35](#)
- [AUSA Capital District](#)
- [Blue Star Mothers Capital Region NY2](#)
- [Disabled American Veterans \(DAV\)](#)
- [Jewish War Veterans](#)
- [Marine Corps League-W.D. OBrien Det 241](#)
- [Submarine Vets Albany-Saratoga Base](#)
- [Tri-County Council Vietnam Era Veterans](#)
- [Veterans of Foreign Wars \(VFW\)](#)
- [VFW Watervliet Post 729](#)
- [VFW Sheehy-Palmer Post 6776](#)
- [VFW Weininger Post 8692](#)
- [VFW Wigand Post 8444](#)

<p>Veterans of Foreign War Wm. F. Wigand Post 8444 370 Central Avenue Albany, NY 12206 (518) 465-6992 www.facebook.com/Wigand-Post-8444-117247008294450/ Monthly meeting: 6pm on second Tue</p>	<p>American Legion Zaloga Post 1520 4 Everett Rd. Ext. Albany, NY 12205 (518) 459-1520 http://zalogapost1520.org Monthly meeting: 7pm on second Tue (except Jul, Aug, & Dec)</p>	<p>Tri-County Council of Vietnam Era Veterans PO Box 11100 Albany, NY 12211 (518) 465-6829 www.tccvev.com Monthly meeting: 7pm on first Tue at AL Zaloga Post (4 Everett Rd Ext, Albany)</p>
--	---	---

162 Washington Ave, Albany, New York 12210 | (518) 447-7710 | FAX (518) 447-7714
www.AlbanyCounty.com/veterans





UPCOMING VETERAN EVENTS

Sep	Suicide Awareness Month			
2-Sep	V-J (Victory of Japan) Day			
5-13Sep	Global Foundries 5k&10k/VCHC	Virtual Event		www.malta5k.com/
7-Sep	Labor Day			
11-Sep	Patriot Day			
12-Sep	PTS Awareness Ride/Operation At Ease	Virtual Event		www.operationatease.org/events/ride-2020
17-Sep	Constitution Citizenship Day			
18-Sep	Air Force Birthday			
18-Sep	Air National Guard Birthday			
18-Sep	POW-MIA Recognition Day			
27-Sep	Gold Star Mother's Day			
28Sep-4Oct	Soldier on 5K	Virtual Event		www.soldieron5k.run/
2-3 Oct	Veteran Volunteers to Clean DC Memorials			Washington, DC
3-Oct	Oktoberfest Take Out Dinner	3-6pm		VFW Weininger Post, Colonie
11-18Oct	Army Ten Miler	Virtual Event		www.armytenmiler.com/
12-Oct	Columbus Day			
13-Oct	Navy Birthday			
13-16Oct	AUSA Annual Meeting	Virtual Event		
26-Oct	Day of the Deployed			
27-Oct	Navy Day			
31-Oct	Halloween			
Nov	Veterans & Military Family Month			
Nov	Warrior Care Month			
1-Nov	Daylight Savings Time Ends			
2-Nov	Albany County Honor A Veteran Ceremony	830am		(Tentative, location TBD)
3-Nov	Election Day			
10-Nov	Marine Corps Birthday			
11-Nov	Veterans Day			
11-Nov	Armistice/Remembrance Day			
11-Nov	Veterans Ball/VCHC	Virtual Event	7pm	www.vchcny.org/images/LiveEvent2020/
12-Nov	Veteran Service Officer Conf		915am-1pm	VAMC, Albany
21-Nov	Westerlo Hometown Heroes Banner Ceremony		2pm	Westerlo Baptist Church
26-Nov	Thanksgiving Day			
7-Dec	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day			
7-Dec	Albany County Honor A Veteran Ceremony		830am	(Tentative, location TBD)
12-Dec	Wreaths Across America			Saratoga National Cemetery, Schuylerville
25-Dec	Christmas Day			
Every Friday	Veterans & Friends Breakfast		8am	Gateway Diner, Albany

NEWS YOU CAN USE

UPDATES TO OUR VISITOR POLICY

The Albany VA Medical Center prioritizes the safety of our Veterans and staff. To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, visitation has been limited. Our current visitation policy is focused on balancing the needs & wellbeing of our Veterans.

The following instances permits one (1) visitor (family member, caretaker or responsible adult escort over the age of 18) **ONLY** at a time:

- **Compassionate Care - Hospitalized Veterans receiving End of Life Care whose death is expected in the near future**
- **Hospitalized Veterans with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, & Veterans with cognitive impairments including dementia**
- **Essential & Critical to the Care of the Veteran** (visitation for this purpose must be essential to the care of the Veteran) including:
Accompanying a Veteran to an appointment when he/she is unable to transport themselves or on discharge that requires teaching of a skill the Veteran is unable to perform (e.g., wound care, etc.) or during the intake process and/or discharge process of a Veteran having same day procedure involving sedation.

Upon entering the facility, all visitors will be screened for signs & symptoms of COVID-19 including temperature taken as part of screening process. **If you screen positive for signs & symptoms, travel, and/or exposure to COVID-19 person(s), visitation is not permitted.**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Albany VA Medical Center

Wear a Mask. Maintain Social distancing. Hand Hygiene frequently

Stratton VA Medical Center, Albany, NY

Flu Clinic 2020

Moving Forward with Your Safety, Our Priority

This year's Flu clinic will be conducted by

APPOINTMENT ONLY

Walk-Ins will not be accepted due to newly enhanced safety precautions against COVID-19.

You may begin scheduling your Flu Shot
Mon. Sept. 21, 2020 by calling 518-626-PACT(7228).

The **FLU SHOT Clinic** will be located on the
First (1st) floor, near the back elevators.

Veterans' Pet Support Project

Quality Services for
Veterans and their Pets



Companion animals have a positive and enriching impact on our lives. Together, Mohawk Hudson Humane Society and Tri-City Rentals are committed to helping veterans adopt and care for their pets by providing high-quality care and support services.

Spay and Neuter

MHHS will provide spay and neuter surgeries at no cost for cats, dogs and rabbits of veterans who qualify based on their income.

Free Core Vaccinations and Microchip Identification

- For dogs: canine distemper, Bordetella and rabies
- For cats: feline distemper and rabies
- One microchip identifier per pet will be provided at no charge

Spay/neuter and wellness service recipients must income qualify. Services are limited based on funding available.

Fee-Waived Pet Adoption

Adoption fees will be waived for veterans who are able to properly care for a pet, with or without support. VA staff referral is required and adopters will follow the standard Humane Society adoption process.

Pet Food Pantry

Via the Furry Friends Food Pantry, veterans can obtain pet food at no charge.

Yoga with Cats

Yoga with cats classes combine fitness and fun with adoptable pets. Veterans may attend four complimentary sessions. Classes are held monthly.

Contact your VA representative for more details and to receive service vouchers.

SPONSORED BY



TITLE SPONSOR
GLOBALFOUNDRIES
 malta
5k10k
2020
VIRTUAL
 PRESENTING SPONSORS
TEL TOKYO ELECTRON
RUNNERS CLUB
ADIRONDACK TRUST COMPANY Above & Beyond
D.A. COLLINS COMPANIES

VIRTUAL DATES

SEPTEMBER September 5th-13th



VCHC VETERANS & COMMUNITY HOUSING COALITION

All proceeds this year will go to the Veterans & Community Housing Coalition (VetHelp), Malta- Stillwater EMS, Malta Ridge and Round Lake Fire Departments and the Roundabout Runners Youth Club.

STRIDE
WOODED WARRIORS
Warrior Weekend @ SCORE
 Sept. 11- 13th
SCORE Camp Grounds
 2182 State Route 203, Chatham, NY
Free Event
 Enjoy a tent-camping weekend in the great outdoors with fellow veterans and their families.
 Please RSVP to STRIDE Warrior Liaison, Don Tallman
 dtallman@stride.org or STRIDE Office @ 518- 598- 1279



PTSD - Awareness Ride
(It's not a disorder)

Operation At Ease
GOING VIRTUAL!

September 12, 2020

Registration 10am @ SPITZIES - 1970 Central Ave. Albany, NY
 KSU @ NOON \$20 per rider, \$10 per passenger

Join us at the end to welcome bikes & veterans at Trick Shots: 1602 Route 9 #1, 4443, Clifton Park, NY
Live Music, Lunch, Raffles & Vendors



www.operationatease.org
events@operationatease.org



Helping Veterans • Saving Dogs • Changing Lives

5K VIRTUAL
 TO BENEFIT
SOLDIER ON
REGISTER NOW!
SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 4, 2020
 Hosted by:
GENERAL DYNAMICS
 Mission Systems
www.SoldierOn5K.run





Robert L. Weininger
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Post 8692
140 VFW Drive, Colonie



Oktoberfest 2020
TAKE OUT DINNER



October 3rd . .
3 PM-6PM \$12 PP.



Full German Dinner

Bratwurst, Black Forest Baked Ham,
Sauerkraut, German Potato Salad,
German Pretzels & Apple Crisp for
Dessert.

For Reservations call
Bill Marquart 518-869-5888

or

Jim Haas 518-452-1395/
jimhaas10@gmail.com



All CDC regulations regarding Covid 19 Safety will be in place.

An Evening With and For Our Veterans



Sadly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will not be able to hold The Fifth Annual Veterans Ball this year. This event helps us raise the necessary funds to provide extensive service to our homeless veterans.

Caffe Lena has graciously offered to host a virtual event for VCHC to honor our Veterans and raise the needed funds for our programs. We hope to build on our past success with this year's special event so that we may continue to serve the homeless veterans in our community.

Homeless Veteran. I am confident that you will agree that those two words should never be used in the same sentence. Yet each year, in our local communities VCHC serves over 200 veterans and their families. These are men and women who served our Country, Homeless.

Veterans & Community Housing Coalition has made a commitment to our local veterans to ensure that they receive the housing and support services they earned and deserve while transitioning to independent living after their military service. Like so many not for profit organizations, the pandemic has had a devastating effect on our organization and the brave women and men we serve.

Please join us on Veterans Day as we honor our Veterans from every conflict and every branch of our Country's Military. Enjoy entertainment from many veteran and civilian bands and a visit to the New York State Military Museum. Feel the pride of America as we listen to the experiences of our Veterans and active duty military members. Celebrate Veterans Day with us!

Your support will ensure that we can continue to provide safe, decent and affordable housing while providing the necessary support services to help our Veterans regain their dignity and lead productive lives in our community.



VETERANS & FRIENDS

BREAKFAST CLUB

WHERE: Alexis Diner, 294 North Greenbush Road, Troy, NY
(518-286-2603)

WHEN: Every Tuesday at 8:00 am

WHERE: Bellevue Cafe, 2630 Broadway, Schenectady, NY
(518-393-7720)

WHEN: First and Third Wednesday at 9:00 am

WHERE: Schodack Diner, 1842 Columbia Tpke., Castleton, NY
(518-477-5014)

WHEN: Every Thursday at 8:00 am

WHERE: Malta Diner, 2476 Rt. 9, Malta, NY
(518-899-5099)

WHEN: Third Thursday of every month at 9:00 am

WHERE: IHOP Restaurant, 611 Plank Road, Clifton Park, NY
(518-348-1892)

WHEN: Every Thursday at 9:00 am

WHERE: Gateway Diner, 899 Central Ave., Albany, NY
(518-482-7557)

WHEN: Every Friday at 8:00 am

All Veterans and their friends are welcome to join us at any time
 for a breakfast near you.

