



County of Albany Veterans Service Bureau Newsletter

January-February 2023

Daniel P. McCoy
Albany County Executive
Kenneth Secor
Director



Services for Veterans

Albany County Veterans Service Bureau provides information on the various Veterans benefits and 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 records
- Job referrals
- Return the FAVOR cards

Veterans Service Officers (VSO)

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

Ken Secor, SGM (Ret)
Jim Ader, SGT (Ret)
Call (518) 447-7710 or email at
veteransbureau@albanycountyny.gov



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 and available every day, 24/7, to all Veterans, all service members, National Guard & Reserve, family members & friends.

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

Message from the Director

I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season. The new year has started and we are off to a great start!

In our last issue I told you about our new Veteran Peer Support Program and part of that included free hot yoga sessions. I'm happy to say that it was such a hit that we are continuing those sessions throughout 2023. They are conducted at the Hot Yoga Spot in Stuyvesant Plaza every Thursday at 6pm. The class fills up quickly so make sure you register online with the Hot Yoga Spot. Also, we have some other initiatives in the works associated with the Peer Support Program that hopefully will be announced soon and detailed in the next newsletter. This is exciting news and we can't wait to share it with you once everything is finalized.

Our monthly Honor A Veteran ceremonies are being conducted and have been well attended. Please see the calendar of events on our webpage for the most recent details that include locations and honorees. We are planning ceremonies for 2023 and there are dates available. If you would like to nominate a Veteran for this honor, please contact me (518-447-7710 or kenneth.secor@albanycountyny.gov) with the Veteran's name and point of contact for the family.

As always, thank you to all my fellow Veterans.

Veterans & Retirees See Record Pay Increase

VA is increasing compensation payment rates based on the latest [cost-of-living adjustment \(COLA\) announcement](#). Beginning Jan. 1, 2023, Veterans and beneficiaries who receive VA compensation benefits are receiving an 8.7% increase in their monthly payments—the largest increase in over 30 years.

The annual [COLA](#) increase is tied to the Social Security rate change and is based on the [consumer price index](#) (CPI). The CPI, provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, measures the average changes in cost for urban goods and services. The Department of Labor takes a snapshot of the costs of a select group of goods and services and compares those costs to the previous year. When there is an increase, those receiving benefits see a boost in their monthly payments for the upcoming year.

If you are receiving disability compensation benefits from VA, you can use VA disability compensation benefit rates tables to [find your current monthly payment amount](#).

Military retirement, VA Disability Compensation, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, and special benefit allowances will all see increases.

100 Heritage Lane, Albany, New York 12211 | (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. A County Proclamation is presented to the Veteran's family and an American flag that was flown over our Nation's Capitol is raised 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>
or call (518) 447-7710

Calls to Veterans Crisis Line Spike Over New Year Holiday

The number of calls from Veterans and their family members to the VA suicide prevention hotline spiked over the New Year's holiday, news that department officials are saying shows increase awareness and accessibility of the emergency service. Over the two-day weekend, the Veterans Crisis Line fielded 3,869 calls, up almost 19% from typical weekend levels so far this fiscal year.

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 and available every day, 24/7, to all Veterans, all service members, National Guard & Reserve, family members & friends.

Any Veteran in need can reach the Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 988, then press 1 or at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>.

Free Training Programs Offer Path to Tech Careers

Veterans and their spouses are eligible for free training programs offered by [NPower](#).

NPower's program has served more than 1,600 Veterans and military spouses with free tech training, professional development, social and mental health support, assistance navigating VA benefits, paid learning opportunities and job placements – all for aiding participants into a successful career in tech.

Technology jobs are in high demand and [competition for tech workers will remain strong](#). Veterans are well positioned to meet this demand. Veterans often possess sharp technical skills and have experience with complex equipment. The military prepares individuals to operate in fast-paced environments, and they do so with teamwork and an ability to apply problem solving to any issue.

Easy Access to VA Products, Services

[Login.gov](#) is a U.S. government service that provides seamless access to government websites. A [Login.gov](#) account allows you to use the same email and password to access [VA.gov](#), My HealtheVet, VA/DoD Ebenefits and the VA Health and Benefits mobile app. Plus, you can securely sign in to USAJOBS and TSA pre-check, and apply for SBA small business loans and disaster aid.

COVID-19 & Flu Vaccinations at VA

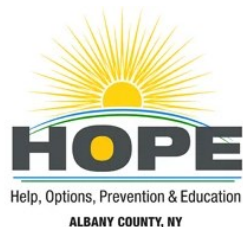
The Albany VA Medical Center is still providing COVID-19 and flu vaccinations. To schedule an appointment call (518) 626-7228, option 2. More information can be found at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>.



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.



Albany County's suicide and warning prevention app for your smartphone. A source of information if you need help or if you know someone that does. It provides warning signs, what to say, help for Veterans, teens/young adults and adults, resources, contacts, and assessments.

Available through iTunes and Google Play stores.

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>

Commissary Shopping Privileges for Veterans

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has been hard at work spreading the news to Veterans about their ability to shop at [commissaries](#). Working with Veteran Service Organizations to promote, inform and gather feedback amongst the Veteran community about this privilege has proven effective. Engaging with Veterans, DeCA has learned that while many are now utilizing this benefit, others still are unaware. [Verify your eligibility](#) for this exclusive benefit.

Commissary shopping privileges are available to the following groups:

- ▶ Veterans with any service-connected disabilities documented by VA
- ▶ Veterans who are Purple Heart recipients
- ▶ Veterans who are former prisoners of war
- ▶ Individuals assessed, approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible Veterans under VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Contact the installation where you intend to shop; inquire about their current policies regarding installation access.

Discounts & Free Stuff!

[Veterans, Gold Star Families free lifetime pass to national parks](#) On Veterans Day 2022, the U.S. National Park Service unveiled a lifetime pass providing free entrance to national parks for Veterans and their families. The pass gives free access to about 2,000 public locations spread out across more than 400 million acres of public lands.

[Firestone/Goodyear/Bridgestone](#) Exclusive discounts on automotive tires from PatriotStoreDirect.

[Carhartt](#) 25% off for Military.

[Foot Locker](#) 15% discount for Active Duty, Veterans, National Guard, Reservists and dependents of Active Duty and Retirees.

[Regal](#) Discounts at select theatres. Available at box office.

[Outback](#) 10% off every day.

[Texas de Brazil](#) 20% off, not valid on holidays.

[Disney Cruise Line](#) Military rates on new bookings on select cruises with a maximum of one stateroom per military member per cruise.

[Beaches by Sandals](#) Extra 10% off on top of all special promotions.

[TurboTax](#) File federal and state taxes for free. Offer for enlisted active duty and reservists only.



Their mission is to provide housing and support services to all homeless Military Veterans and their families and to advocate on behalf of all Military Veterans and their families to provide housing opportunities for low income households. They are also one of the very few organizations in the region that provides support and services for homeless women Veterans.

20 Prospect Street
Bldg 2, Suite 313
Ballston Spa, NY 12020
(518) 885-0091
<http://www.vchcny.org/>



This is a dedicated all-volunteer not-for-profit organization that honors local Veterans by flying them to Washington, DC for a day to visit and reflect at the military memorials dedicated to their service, sacrifices and memories.

PO Box 13776
Albany, NY 12212-3776
(518) 857-8881
<http://patriotflight.org/>

RESOURCES & VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS

There are many resources and Veteran organizations within Albany County and a few are shown below. A larger listing is available on our webpage at: <http://www.albanycounty.com/veterans>

American Legion Helderberg Post 977

988 Altamont Blvd.
Altamont, NY 12009
(518) 861-6848

<https://helderbergpost977.org/>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on second Mon

Veterans of Foreign War Boyd-Hilton Post 7062

11 Mill St.
Altamont, NY 12209
(518) 861-8323

www.facebook.com/BoydHiltonVFW7062/

Monthly meeting:
1pm on third Sun

Marine Corps League Capt. Wm. Dale O'Brien Det 241

(518) 237-1712

<https://www.facebook.com/CaptWmDaleOBrien241/>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on 2nd Wed at
Am. Legion Zaloga Post

American Legion Fort Orange Post 30

525 Delaware Ave.
Albany, NY 12209

<https://www.facebook.com/fortorange.legion>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on first Wed

Veterans of Foreign War Sheehy-Palmer Post 6776

525 Delaware Ave.
Albany, NY 12209
(518) 465-9349

<https://www.facebook.com/VFW6776>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on second Thu

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
Am. Legion Zaloga Post

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)

Veterans of Foreign War Wm. F. Wigand Post 8444

370 Central Ave.
Albany, NY 12206
(518) 465-6992

www.facebook.com/Wigand-Post-8444-117247008294450/

Monthly meeting:
6pm on second Tue

American Veterans (AMVETS) EJ Knapik Post 35

PO Box 4152
Schenectady, NY 12304

www.facebook.com/cdnysausa/

Monthly meeting:
7pm on fourth Thur
at Guilderland Elks Lodge

UPCOMING VETERAN EVENTS

On a monthly basis we will email a listing of Veteran events to anyone that is subscribed to our newsletter.

The most current listing of Veteran events can also be found on our webpage at:

<https://www.albanycounty.com/departments/veterans-service-bureau/events>.

If your organization has Veteran events that you would like added to our listing, please contact

Ken Secor at (518) 447-7710 or kenneth.secor@albanycountyny.gov.