



County of Albany Veterans Service Bureau Newsletter

May-June 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

So far it's been an up and down spring as far as the weather goes. However, warmer weather will be here soon. Already we've seen a lot of Veteran events popping up. Please keep in mind that the Veteran fundraisers that will be held during these warmer months are usually the main source of funds that support our local Veteran organizations. So I hope to see you at some of these. If you know of local events coming up, please let us know so we can help promote your events, attend, and even provide resources.

Memorial Day is almost here. While most people look at this as a long weekend to go on vacation and have parties and barbeques, we as Veterans know and understand what this day really means. Make sure you take time during the holiday weekend to reflect on those service men and women who are no longer with us. Also take some time to educate and inform others on what this day means. Lastly, there will be many Memorial Day events coming up and we will list as many as possible on our webpage. Enjoy the holiday weekend and if you see me at any of these events, say hello as it's always great to see my fellow Veterans.

Just a reminder that if any Veteran organization would like us to attend your membership meetings to make a presentation about available resources, the new PACT Act, or just answer questions, feel free to contact me and we will make it happen.

Our monthly Honor A Veteran ceremonies are listed on the calendar of events on our webpage with the most recent details that include locations and honorees. We are planning ceremonies for 2023 and 2024 and there are still dates available for both years. 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.

VA ID Card

"How do I prove that I'm a Veteran?" It's a question often asked by those who once served in the military. Many businesses offer discounts to Veterans for restaurants, hotels, stores, recreational activities and even home improvement, among other perks. Former service members will want to take advantage of those opportunities.

You'll want to apply for VA's Veteran ID Card (VIC), which is a digital photo ID you can use to get those discounts. Since September 2022, all new VIC have been digital. A Veteran with a physical ID card can continue using it. The VIC is separate from the VA health care ID, which a Veteran receives when enrolling in VA health care.

If you have any questions or need help, email VA's VIC program at vetidcard@va.gov

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>



VA Health & Benefits App

Try the initial version of the official VA: Health and Benefits app from the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to manage existing VA claims and appointments and message with your VA health care providers. You can also access common VA letters and update your VA.gov profile information.

Need help with this mobile app? Call 800-698-2411 (TTY: 711). Available 24/7.

- ▶ Initial release features:
- ▶ Biometric sign-in - Take advantage of your phone's built-in security features like fingerprint and face recognition to securely access the app.
- ▶ Claims and appeals - View claim status and submit additional evidence using your phone's camera or by uploading documents.
- ▶ Appointments - View or cancel your VA medical appointments and easily add existing appointments to your phone's calendar.
- ▶ Secure messaging - Send and receive messages from your VA health providers.
- ▶ Letters - Download common VA letters and documents such as Benefit Summary and Service Verification Letter, Proof of Service Card, Commissary Letter, and more.
- ▶ Profile - View and update your VA.gov profile, including your contact information and direct deposit information for disability compensation and pension benefits.
- ▶ Facility locator - Find VA facilities nearest to you.
- ▶ Veterans Crisis Line - Get quick access to the VA Crisis Line.



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

VA Home Loan Benefit

Are you thinking about buying a home but are worried about money for a down payment, a low credit score or even a previous bankruptcy or foreclosure? You may want to check out your hard-earned VA home loan benefit.

Here's the breakdown of your earned [VA Home Loan entitlement](#):

- ▶ Generally not required to have a down payment.
- ▶ Not required to carry any mortgage insurance, which saves borrowers hundreds of dollars on their monthly mortgage payments.
- ▶ Limited closing costs.
- ▶ Very competitive interest rates.
- ▶ Not charged any prepayment penalty if able to pay off their mortgage earlier than required while using the VA loan guaranty.
- ▶ VA provides assistance to help Veterans retain their homes during periods of temporary financial difficulty.
- ▶ Can be used multiple times throughout a Veteran's life.



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>

How to check your PACT Act claim status

Many Veterans, their families and survivors have filed claims related to a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, radiation and other toxic substances—the [PACT Act](#). It also added more health conditions that VA will presume are caused by exposure to these substances making it easier for beneficiaries to access VA benefits and services. You can easily [check the status of your PACT Act claim](#) once it has been submitted.

How do I check the status of my PACT Act claim?

Sign into your va.gov account with your existing [Login.gov](#), [ID.me](#), [DS Logon](#) or [My HealtheVet account](#). If you don't have any of these accounts, you can create a free Login.gov or ID.me account. Once you are signed into your account, simply follow these three steps to check the status of your PACT Act claim:

- ▶ Go to your "My VA" dashboard. You will find the link for this dashboard in the top right corner of the page once you're signed in.
- ▶ Scroll down to the "Track Claims" section. There, you'll see a summary of the latest status information for any open claims or appeals you may have.
- ▶ Click on the "View Status" button for a specific claim. You'll go to a page with more details about that claim's status and supporting evidence. Evidence may include documents like a doctor's report or medical test results. (Claim status tool FAQs can be found [here](#).)

What else can I learn about my PACT Act claim?

After you log in and follow the steps above, you can find out:

- ▶ Where your claim, appeal or decision review is in the review process. (Learn what your claim status means [here](#).)
- ▶ Which documents and forms VA needs from you.
- ▶ Which documents have already been received from health care providers, government agencies and other sources.
- ▶ Details like your claim type, the date VA received your claim and the name of your representative.

What should I do if I need help filing a claim or have questions?

Veterans Service Officers are available to assist a Veteran or their survivor in filing claims, reviewing information or answering questions.

Discounts & Free Stuff!

Discounts

[MLB Shop](#) 15% off online orders for Veterans, military, first responders, and their immediate family members.

[CheapTickets](#) 18% discount on travel deals. See website for details.

100 Heritage Lane, Albany, New York 12211 | (518) 447-7710 | FAX (518) 447-7714
www.AlbanyCounty.com/veterans





U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

Stratton VA Medical Center serves Veterans in 22 counties of upstate New York, western Massachusetts and Vermont and operates 11 community-based outpatient clinics.

113 Holland Avenue, Albany, NY 12208
(518) 626-5000|800-223-4810

<https://www.albany.va.gov/>

VA Nurse Helpline 24 hr. medical advice for Veterans: 800-877-6976



Their mission is to save military lives by linking Veterans and active duty service members with confidential counselors via Telehealth or by locating a local provider who can help them. Their critical task is to foster a safe environment where they can get the help they need.

501 (c)(3) Nonprofit #84-2612081

640 Grooms Rd, Suite 230

Clifton Park, NY

(518)712-9820

<https://www.hicksstrong.org/>

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 ken-neth.secor@albanycountyny.gov.

Resources & Veterans Organizations

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

<p>American Legion Fort Orange Post 30</p> <p>525 Delaware Ave. Albany, NY 12209</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/fortorange.legion</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on first Wed</p>	<p>Veterans of Foreign War Sheehy-Palmer Post 6776</p> <p>525 Delaware Ave. Albany, NY 12209 (518) 465-9349</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/VFW6776</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on second Thu</p>	<p>Marine Corps League Capt. Wm. Dale O'Brien Det 241</p> <p>(518) 237-1712</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/CaptWmDaleOBrien241/</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on 2nd Wed at Am. Legion Zaloga Post</p>
<p>American Legion E.T. Ruane Post 476</p> <p>93 Oneida St. Cohoes, NY 12047 (518) 235-4989</p> <p>http://americanlegionpost476.com</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 12pm on fourth Sun</p>	<p>Veterans of Foreign War Boyd-Hilton Post 7062</p> <p>11 Mill St. Altamont, NY 12209 (518) 861-8323</p> <p>www.facebook.com/BoydHiltonVFW7062/</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 1pm on third Sun</p>	<p>Tri-County Council of Vietnam Era Veterans</p> <p>PO Box 11100 Albany, NY 12211 (518) 465-6829</p> <p>www.tccvev.com</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on first Tue at Am. Legion Zaloga Post</p>
<p>American Legion Helderberg Post 977</p> <p>988 Altamont Blvd. Altamont, NY 12009 (518) 861-6848</p> <p>https://helderbergpost977.org/</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on second Mon</p>	<p>Veterans of Foreign War Wm. F. Wigand Post 8444</p> <p>370 Central Ave. Albany, NY 12206 (518) 465-6992</p> <p>www.facebook.com/Wigand-Post-8444-117247008294450/</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 6pm on second Tue</p>	<p>American Veterans (AMVETS) EJ Knapik Post 35</p> <p>PO Box 4152 Schenectady, NY 12304</p> <p>www.facebook.com/cdnaysa/</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on fourth Thur at Guilderland Elks Lodge</p>
<p>American Legion Blanchard-Currey Post 1040</p> <p>16 W. Poplar Drive Delmar, NY 12054 (518) 439-9819</p> <p>http://nabpost1040.us/</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on first Mon</p>	<p>Veterans of Foreign War Robert Weininger Post 8692</p> <p>140 VFW Dr Albany, NY 12205 (518) 456-7794</p> <p>www.vfwpost8692.com</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on second Mon</p>	<p>American Legion Zaloga Post 1520</p> <p>4 Everett Rd. Ext. Albany, NY 12205 (518) 459-1520</p> <p>http://zalogapost1520.org</p> <p>Monthly meeting: 7pm on second Tue (except Jul, Aug, & Dec)</p>