



THE UTAH

A PUBLICATION OF THE UTAH DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

VETERANS VOICE

VETERANS.UTAH.GOV • MAY 2015 • PARTNERSHIP ISSUE

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Every Veteran Deserves a Second Chance

Justice Outreach Now Extends to District Courts

By Jill Atwood
Chief Communications Officer, VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLCHCS)



Judge Royal Hansen at the Veterans Court

A Navy Veteran tells judge Royal Hansen that he was tempted to take a drink, but didn't because of the Veterans Court and the promises he made to himself. He has tears streaming down his face. He wants a better life and wants to accept the help VA and the court are extending.

An Army Veteran is on the road back as well. Busted on a drug charge, he is now clean and working to regain his life and family. He's in residential treatment with VA and taking advantage of our Recreation Therapy program. He loves it and can't say enough about trying new things.

The Veterans Court is relatively new in Third District Court at the Matheson Court House; however, it is not new at the Federal and Municipal levels in Salt Lake City. In fact, the concept of a Veterans Court is spreading into Nevada and Idaho and growing nationwide. The court connects Veterans in the criminal justice system to VA services. Charges vary from misdemeanors to serious felonies, but the end goal is the same: a Veteran gets a second chance if he or she wants it.

Judge Royal Hansen will be the first to say, "It's not a free pass. Even though the Veterans have served they are still accountable for their actions." They can forgo incarceration if they comply with requirements. Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator, Amy Earle, estimates an 85 percent success rate so far since the program's inception. VASLCHCS is now in 13 courtrooms across the tri-state region. In that time over 350 Veterans have been touched by the program. 🇺🇸

WORLD WAR II/KOREAN WAR • VIETNAM WAR • COLD WAR/PEACETIME • GULF WAR/OIF/OEF • FAMILY



Partnerships—veterans, military and their family members are better served and stronger by all of us working together.



Director's Message

GARY R. HARTER
Executive Director, Utah Department
of Veterans and Military Affairs

Thanks for all of the great feedback on our new-format *Veterans Voice!* We appreciate your thoughts, ideas and input as we strive to make it even more effective.

What we wanted to focus on this issue is Partnerships, and we have some great ones in Utah. We work each and every day with the veterans' service organizations, the U.S. Veterans Administration, state agencies, local governments, the Utah National Guard, military installations, legislators and congressional offices, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, the business community, civic supporters and passionate people across our great state. None of us can do any of this alone, and veterans, military and their family members are better served and stronger by all of us working together.

We have broad-based working groups that address employment, and education, and mental wellness, and reintegration, and young veterans. Utah created a 23-member Commission on Veterans and Military Affairs comprised of legislators, and cabinet members, and executive branches, and veterans, and academia and the VA and others. There are regional veterans' alliances in several sections of the state, with the Northern Utah Veterans' Alliance being in existence for over forty years. And there are similar groups formed by chambers of commerce to support military affairs. Each one of these groups has the single focus to make things better each and every day.

In the following pages you will find sections and articles relating to a number of these groups. The federal VA will have information in each issue, and others will from time to time. Since partners are important to us, in this issue you will find information from the Utah National Guard, Hill Air Force Base, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Utah Military and Veterans Employment Coalition, Utah Defense Alliance, Military Installation Development Authority, Utah Aging and Disability Resource Center and others. Hopefully you will find the information useful.

We are also getting ready to celebrate Memorial Day and recognize all of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our liberties and way of life. We encourage you to participate in one of the many Memorial Day events being held across Utah this month, and several are listed in the article.

On May 7th, the Secretary of the VA, Robert McDonald, visited Utah and many of us had the opportunity to engage with him. It was great having him here and to listen to him as he continues to transform the VA and move forward in serving veterans. He was in Utah to give the commencement speech at the University of Utah, from which he received an advanced degree a few years ago.

Well, that's it for this month. We wish you all the best, and please let us know how we can serve you better. 🇺🇸

Outreach, websites, claims assistance, events and resources.



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

veterans.utah.gov

Register your information with the Veterans Information System:
uvisreg.utah.gov/vtsreg/public/Register



CLAIMS ASSISTANCE CALENDAR

veterans.utah.gov/outreach-calendar

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

veterans.utah.gov/events-calendar



COORDINATION OF VETERANS SERVICES

veterans.utah.gov/coordination-of-veteran-services

Upcoming Events—details at veterans.utah.gov/events-calendar

MAY

Friday, May 15

Women's Health Fair • 1230
VA Campus Multipurpose Center, Bldg. 8
RSVP to Andrea Bleak 801-582-1565 x 5242

1940s Hangar Dance
Friday, May 15 • 1900
4196 S. Airport Parkway • St. George

Saturday, May 16

Armed Forces Day Concert • 1630–2130
The Gallivan Center, 239 S. Main St. • SLC

Marine Corps League Golf Tournament • 0700
4210 South Bluegrass Way • St. George

Nam Jam All Day Event • 0900
American Legion Post 129
604 South 7800 East • Huntsville

Wings & Wheels • 1000
4196 South Airport Parkway • St. George

Utah County Veterans Resource Fair
Utah County Courthouse • 1300 – 1900
51 South University Ave. • Provo

Wednesday, May 20

VA 2K Walk and Roll Event • 1100
Gem Court Garden at the VA Medical
Center • Salt Lake City

Thursday, May 21

12th Annual Veterans Memorial Golf
Scramble • 0700
Hubbard Memorial Golf Course • 7005 Golf
Course Drive • Hill Air Force Base

Friday, May 22

Payson Memorial Day Program • 1030
Central Utah Veterans Home
1551 North Main St. • Payson

Veteran Resource Fair • 1:00 pm
Provo Old Court House
51 South University Ave • Provo, UT

Monday, May 25

Memorial Day Program • 0930
Fort Douglas Cemetery

Memorial Day Commemoration • 1000
Utah Veterans Memorial Park
17111 So. Camp Williams Rd. • Bluffdale

SUVH Memorial Day Program • 1430
Southern Utah Veterans Home
160 North 200 East • Ivins

Thursday, May 28

Hero 2 Hired Job Fair • 11:00 am–3:00 pm
Davis Conference Center
1651 North 700 West • Layton, UT 84041

Friday, May 29

Southern Utah Veterans Home Open
House — Monument Unveiling • 1400
160 North 200 East • Ivins

Saturday, May 30

Veterans Information Convention:
Improving the Lives of Veterans • 0900
Abbey Inn • 1129 So. Bluff St. • St. George

JUNE

Wednesday, June 3

St. George Veterans Legal Clinic • 1730
230 N. 1680 E. • Bldg. N • St. George

Saturday, June 13

Sounds of Freedom Event
Walk, Roll or Run 10K • 0800
All Day Event • Layton Commons Park • 1000
437 N. Wasatch Dr. • Layton

Saturday, June 20

Honoring Veterans Event • 1000 • Vernon
Worthen Park • 300 So. 400 E. • St. George

JULY

Wednesday, July 1

St. George Veterans Legal Clinic • 1730
St. George CBOC 230 North 1680 East
Bldg. N • St. George

Thursday, July 2

Call Your Military Hero Day

AUGUST

VJ Commemorate

Saturday and Sunday August 15–16 • 9:00 am
Saturday • Ft. Douglas Museum
Sunday • Wendover, Nevada

Why We

Remember

By Robert Welsh

They hover as a cloud
of witnesses above
this Nation.

—Henry Ward Beecher

On 30 May 1868, a crowd of 5,000 gathered at Arlington National Cemetery for the first Decoration Day exercises. Before strewing flowers upon the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate dead, the crowd listened to an address by then-Gen. James A. Garfield (who would become the 20th President in 1881) which explained what Decoration Day was all about and why it should be commemorated. The following is only the briefest selection of what was a rather lengthy speech:

I am oppressed with a sense of the impropriety of uttering words on this occasion. If silence is ever golden, it must be here beside the graves of fifteen thousand men, whose lives were more significant than speech, and whose death was a poem, the music of which can never be sung.... For love of country they accepted death, and thus resolved all doubts, and made immortal their patriotism and their virtue.... I love to believe that no heroic sacrifice is ever lost; that the characters of men are molded and inspired by what their fathers have done; that treasured up in American souls are all the unconscious influences of the great deeds ... from Agincourt to Bunker Hill.... The voices of these dead will forever fill the land like holy benedictions. What other spot so fitting for their last resting place as this under the shadow of the Capitol saved by their valor? Here, where the grim edge of battle joined; here, where all the hope and fear and agony of their country centered; here let them rest, asleep on the Nation's heart, entombed in the Nation's love!

In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson officially declared Waterloo N.Y. the birthplace of Memorial Day. The day is now observed in every state on the last Monday in May since Congress passed the National Holiday Act of 1971. Then, to ensure the sacrifices of America's fallen heroes are never forgotten, in December 2000 Congress passed and the President signed into law "The National Moment of Remembrance Act," which encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 1500 hours local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation. As Moment of Remembrance founder Carmella LaSpada commented: "It's a way we can all help put the memorial back in Memorial Day." Well said.

On the Thursday before Memorial Day, 1,200 soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry place small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery. They then patrol 24 hours a day during the weekend to ensure that each flag remains standing. It is that dedication to the importance of Memorial Day that should inspire all of us. 🇺🇸



Memorial Day – Arlington National Cemetery

Changes at the VA

By Jill Atwood
Chief Communications Officer, VASLCHCS

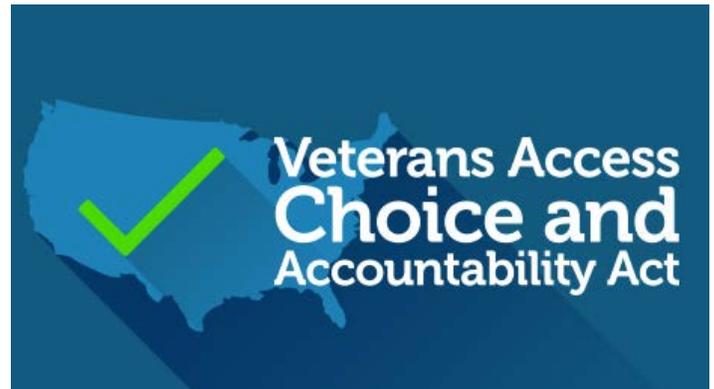
Introducing MY VA

2014 was a difficult year for the VA, but also one of necessary introspection, change, and growth. The VA Salt Lake City HCS wants to reassure our Veterans that despite any internal challenges we face, we never lose sight of what's most important; caring for Veterans. As we move forward we are reminded once again that we can always be better and do more for America's Veterans. That's why we have introduced MY VA. My VA is about putting the interests and needs of our Veterans first. When service to Veterans is a priority, a high-performance culture follows. That's the kind of organization that builds pride and satisfaction in the workforce, and a place where people at every level feel like leaders. It's about creating a new culture where we listen to the Veteran's voice and personal needs, include the family's needs and concerns, value and respect our colleagues' contributions to excellent health care, and collaborate with each other and with community partners to provide the best possible health care.

Net Worth Eliminated As a Health Care Eligibility Factor

To align VA's health care program with other federal health care program's financial assessment requirements, the Secretary of VA approved a process change to cease collection of a Veteran's net worth information for purposes of VHA's financial assessments for health benefits. As of 1 January 2015, VA only considers a Veteran's previous year's gross household income (earned and unearned income) and deductible expenses to determine eligibility and / or copay responsibility for purposes of VA health care enrollment/benefits. It is important to note and be aware that net worth will continue to be considered in determining eligibility for extended care services; e.g., long-term care such as nursing home. 🇺🇸

For more information call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits



VA Expands Choice Program Eligibility, Effective Immediately

In order to expand eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it will determine eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program based on the distance between a Veteran's place of residence and the nearest VA medical facility using driving distance rather than straight-line distance. This change has been published in the Federal Register and is effective immediately.

"VA is pleased to announce the distance calculation change from straight-line to driving distance for the Veterans Choice Program," said Secretary Robert McDonald. "This update to the program will allow more Veterans to access care when and where they want it. We look forward to continued dialogue with Veterans and our partners to help us ensure continued improvements for Veterans to access care."

The change from straight-line to driving distance roughly doubles the number of eligible Veterans. Letters are being sent to the newly eligible Veterans to let them know they are now eligible. If a Veteran does not remember receiving a Veterans Choice Card, or has questions, they can call (866) 606-8198. Effective immediately, VA is also changing the mileage calculation for beneficiary travel to ensure consistency in VA's mileage calculations across the two programs. The beneficiary travel calculation will now be made using the fastest route instead of the shortest route. 🇺🇸

19th SF Soldiers Conduct Operation Skyline

in Sanpete County

By Staff Sgt. Ashley Baum and Spc. Skyeler Lucero

The training provided soldiers with environmental challenges and airborne operation experiences as well as practical real-life situations when they repaired a canal in Spring City.



Blackhawk Helicopter lifts a humvee during the operation



19th Special Forces in training

Approximately 300 soldiers from 19th Special Forces (SF) Group (Airborne) participated in Operation Skyline 2014 for annual training in Manti-La Sal National Forest. The unconventional warfare exercise (UWEX) focused on Operation Detachment-Alphas (ODAs) performing tasks utilized by SF soldiers, who specialize in guerrilla-warfare tactics and subversion for their unique missions.

The UWEX provided ODAs terrain features and climate conditions similar to the various regions the 19th SF teams continue to operate in. “This operation is occurring anywhere from 5,900-10,000 feet and even though it’s summer, mountainous terrain does provide environmental challenges,” said Wooldridge. “It gives us all an appreciation for what we have to prepare for if we’re going to operate in any mountainous environment.”

Several support elements from 19th SF Group Support Battalion and Forward Support Company played a vital role ensuring the UWEX had the critical sustainment ODAs needed. “We’re here to support the teams in any way we can whether they need extra bodies or for us to remain here and do our job and keep equipment maintained when they need it,” said Sgt. Robert Jaques, all-wheeled mechanic for FSC, 19th SF.

Soldiers built and established, from the ground up, a Special Operations

Task Force headquarters and several smaller outlying bases in the Sanpete County vicinity. Many soldiers role-played as opposition forces and guerrilla fighters to create a realistic-training environment during the exercise. Other support elements worked around the clock ensuring the operation ran smoothly.

Soldiers also enhanced their military training by conducting sling-load and airborne operations. Approximately 45 soldiers performed static-line and military-free-fall operations from a U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. Participants took off from Ephraim-Manti Airport and landed in a drop zone owned by a local Ephraim City resident.

In addition to the UWEX, approximately 20 soldiers worked alongside local residents to repair a canal in Spring City, Utah. “This project was an opportunity for us to say thanks for letting us utilize the area and its resources,” said Spencer. “The canal not only looks better, but will be more resilient in future water flows.”

Operation Skyline 2014 took months to prepare and required the collaboration of local city governments and 19th SF leadership. “The military is doing a wonderful job in trying not to impact the civilian population,” said Richard Squire, Ephraim City Mayor. “I think the way things are going right now would make a partnership in the future more readily accessible.”

STEM Education— The Gateway to Exciting Careers

Veterans are well-positioned to help influence the next generation to consider STEM careers, especially considering Utah's significant and enduring contributions to national defense.

By Air Force Sustainment Center Workforce Development Team:
Col. Scott Nowlin, USAF, Acting Director, and Mr. Norm LeClair, Branch Chief.

Utah Veterans are well aware of the role that science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) play in providing the Department of Defense (DOD) with the skilled workforce needed to defend our nation. They have seen first-hand how STEM-related systems, training, and education has given the U.S. the most awesome military capability the world has ever known, and how it has enabled and protected our young men and women as they bravely answer our nation's call to end conflicts and stabilize regions across the globe.

Our military is very technology reliant, with over 90% of the functionality of DOD weapon systems now controlled by computers. The Air Force requirement for advanced software support is expected to triple in the next 10 years with upgrades to existing embedded computer systems, new aerospace systems entering our inventory, and increasing demand for integrated computer and network-based system solutions. For example, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and its associated operational, maintenance, and logistics support systems require more than 20 million lines of code and sophisticated multi-layer information security. The F-35 Helmet Display System alone requires approximately one million lines of code. Our DOD-wide data links and communication structures are driven by advanced, secure, and redundant software systems.

In Utah, Hill Air Force Base (HAFB) currently employs over 1,600 bachelor-degreed scientists and engineers (S&Es) to help sustain our nation's weapon systems, and will be hiring more than 200 S&Es each year for the foreseeable future. Most of these impending workforce

needs will be for computer engineers, electrical engineers, and computer scientists. Hundreds more are for non-degreed but technically-educated materials (composites, metallics, chemicals) and process (welding, plating, coating) technicians.

There is a strong and growing demand across the Wasatch Front for STEM talent to support the DOD industrial base, Utah State and local government, and private industry needs. Given the above, this may be one of the best times for our next generation to think about going into a STEM field. The benefits are extensive and include:

- High Pay
- Equality in the Workplace
- Creativity/Innovation
- Job Satisfaction
- Cross-Marketability



Even with the demands and benefits cited above, many projections indicate a growing shortfall in America's STEM-educated workforce. Utah has commissioned a STEM Action Center (STEM AC) to engage in this area. We feel Veterans are well-positioned to help influence the next generation to consider STEM careers, especially considering Utah's significant and enduring contributions to national defense. Please pass the information provided in this article to those you think might benefit from considering a career in STEM! 🇺🇸

For more information, contact:

AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil

Utah Veterans & Military Employment Coalition (UVMEC)

By Bart Davis



The Coalition is an impressive network of professionals prepared to support the men, women, and family members of those who wear or have worn the uniform of the United States and need employment or better careers.

This organization is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when individuals and organizations collaborate to provide services for others. In the summer of 2011, several government and civilian organizations were using various approaches to address the high unemployment rate among National Guard and Reserve members who were being discharged from the Military and to Veterans as well.

Each organization had defined talents and resources, and they were competing for support from employers and generally confusing job seekers who simply wanted one point of contact to assist in obtaining employment. Senior members of the primary employment-focused organizations met and formed an unofficial partnership (each pledging to support UVMEC) and offered their respective available resources. Some had funds for rental of venues to conduct job fairs; others had advertising and marketing expertise; while still others had manpower and technical resources needed to support the Coalition's efforts. All had access to different segments of the Military and Veteran communities.

You will rarely hear the names of the members of UVMEC, but they include private businesses and state and federal organizations and agencies. Remarkably, without contracts, legal agreements, or board meetings beyond two or three planning lunches a year, they have been able to conduct 16 job fairs throughout the state that resulted in introducing more than 6,200 service members to hundreds of Veteran- and Military-friendly employers.

One of the astonishing facts about this effort is that in terms of cost effectiveness, dollars expended is less than \$200.00 per job offer. Heretofore a government employee would spend that amount in man-hours just filling out forms to register or educate a job seeker — all with minimal tangible results. And, one of the most satisfying results from the relationships this Coalition has produced is an appreciation of each partner's strengths and abilities. While everyone supports the job fairs and preparatory education and training, rather than the previous somewhat adversarial attitude, they now appreciate and enhance each other's strengths and abilities. This makes for an impressive network of professionals all better prepared to support the men, women, and family members of those who wear or have worn the uniform of the United States needing employment or finding better careers.

Almost a thousand Utah families are now enjoying new careers through the selfless efforts of the UVMEC partners. Currently, there are three events scheduled for the remainder of this year (Davis County, Provo, and Sandy) and five are planned again for 2016. Times and locations can be found on the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs' website under Calendar of Events. 🇺🇸

Utah Veterans Owned Business Partnership

By Cory Pearson

A number of conferences are being held to increase education and awareness of business resources that are available to Utah Veterans. The recent Veterans Business Conference was one, being held on May 7th 2015 specifically for those who wanted to start a business or needed help with a current businesses being operated by Veterans. The conference had approximately 175 attendees.

The event was facilitated by the Utah Veterans Owned Business Partnership, which consists of several major players including the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs, Salt Lake Chamber, Salt Lake County, Governor's Office of Economic Development, Small Business Administration, American Legion, private business leaders, education institutions and non-profit groups.

The conference was welcomed via video by Governor Gary Herbert, and the attendees then heard opening (and, later, closing) remarks by Gary Harter, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs, and from Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams. An excellent keynote address was provided by Robert Spendlove, *Why it's A Good Time To Be In Business In Utah*.

The attendees were happy to have a place to go to learn of the many resources available to assist with starting and continued support of businesses in Utah.

Those that participated and helped inform at the event:

- Business Plans (Deb Bilbao, Salt Lake Chamber Women's Business Center)
- Marketing (Ron Baron from Score)
- Funding (Mickey Adams Grames, Utah Microenterprise Loan Fund and Chantel S. Chase, Zions Bank)
- Government Contracting (Chuck Spence, Deputy Director, Procurement Technical Assistance)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Resource Partner: Attendees were able to sign up to connect with representatives from the VA and the Utah State Small Business Resource Partners for mentorship and networking sessions as well. It was a great day for veterans who wanted to start up businesses or have recently done so in the great state of Utah. 🇺🇸





The Military Order of the Purple Heart

By Tom Montez, Patriot

The Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) was formed in 1932 for the protection and mutual interest of all who had received the decoration. It was congressionally chartered in 1958, and the President of the United States is the honorary National Commander-in-Chief. It is composed exclusively of Purple Heart Medal recipients.

Utah has two active MOPH chapters: Chapter 995 in Ogden and Chapter 802 located in Ivins, Utah. Chapter 995 recently gave the Patriot of the Year Award to Jay Wells, the Finance Officer, and to John Cole, the 1st

Vice Commander. Only one of these patriots could be chosen, so John Cole humbly gave the selection to Jay Wells to have his name forwarded to the department level. The Patriot of the Year at the department level will advance to the regional level, and if he wins there will be elevated to national level.

The road to freedom is paved with Purple Hearts, and the sacrifice of patriot's blood, which is the seed of the tree of Liberty. William Tecumseh Sherman's "War is Hell," is certainly true; but if it wasn't, you could see hell from the war zone. 🇺🇸

If you have a Purple Heart, you are eligible for membership in the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Contact:

- Department Commander Frank Maughan at dragoonb26@msn.com
- Jay Wells at jdkwellsw@peoplepc.com
- Tom Montez at tgmontez@msn.com

Military Centered Alliances By Cory Pearson

The Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs works with a variety of entities in a partnership capacity that benefits all concerned. Here are three good examples.

The Utah Defense Alliance (UDA)

is a broad-based community advocacy organization that promotes the continued vitality of military installations throughout Utah. UDA maintains relationships with senior military leadership, engages with community, state and federal officials, conducts studies, sponsors events, and maintains awareness of relevant issues and opportunities.

www.utahdefensealliance.com



The Military Installation Development Authority (MIDA)

fosters development of under-utilized military land using the provisions of the military's Enhanced Use Lease Program. MIDA was authorized by the Utah Legislature in 2007, its primary focus and reason for its creation, is the 500+ acre Falcon Hill Development at Hill Air Force Base.

<http://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/publicbody/1077.html>



The Top of Utah Military Affairs Committee

is a long-engaged military affairs committee that addresses issues, coordinates efforts, and organizes business leaders to support military organizations and installations across Utah. It does so by combining the efforts of both the Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce and the Davis County Chamber of Commerce into one coordinated effort. 🇺🇸

<http://www.militaryaffairs.org>



Parade and Memorial Wall to Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans

By Dennis Howland, Commander of the Utah State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America

After more than four decades, Utah Vietnam Veterans are finally getting the welcome home they deserve. Nearly 50,000 Vietnam Veterans call Utah their home today. The “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans” will be held at 1100 on 13 June in Layton, Utah, as a part of the annual Sounds of Freedom celebration. This year's celebration includes a parade, a car show, vendors, speeches, flag ceremonies, a 10K run and a concert — and entry is free.

All Veterans’ organizations, military units, and other members of communities are welcome to participate. You don’t have to be a Vietnam Veteran — just have a desire to welcome home Vietnam Veterans. No political statements are permitted in the parade or on any floats.

In addition, a replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall will be brought to a permanent home at the Layton Commons Park.

The project is funded entirely through private donations and is an incredible monument to Vietnam Veterans, offering them and their families a place to remember and honor fallen comrades and loved ones.

Construction on the wall is expected to begin in about a year, and personalized bricks are being sold to help fund the project. A portion of the money will also be raised from parade proceeds, and at an event called “Nam Jam” set for 16 May in Huntsville. Donations of any size are welcomed and appreciated, and we hope to see support from community groups, Veterans’ organizations, corporations and from individuals throughout Utah. 🇺🇸

For more information on the parade or how to donate to the Layton wall project, contact Dennis Howland at 801-389-1893 or by email at dennisbowland@msn.com.



The American Legion: Who We Are, What We Do

By Paula Stephenson, State Commander

The American Legion was incorporated by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic Veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. It is the nation’s largest wartime Veterans service organization committed to helping our fellow service members and Veterans, mentoring youth, and sponsoring community programs to advocate patriotism, honor and promote strong national security. And, it is a family.

Utah has more than 9,000 Legionnaires in 98 posts. Posts support programs such as American Legion baseball, American Legion Utah Boys State, the American Legion High School Oratorical “Constitution” Contest, U.S. Flag Retirement Ceremonies, U.S. Flag purchase programs

through the American Legion Emblem Sales, military funeral honors, and many other local community programs. The American Legion also has a Service Officer assisting members with VA claims and benefits.

American Legion consists of four fundamental entities (families): (1) membership of current or former members of the military (2) the American Legion Auxiliary, made up of female relatives of a war-era Veteran or the war-era veteran herself; (3) the Sons of the American Legion, male descendants of a war-era Veteran and (4) the American Legion Riders, a program consisting of individuals who are first members of the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, or the Sons of the American Legion, who gather to enjoy motorcycle riding and participate in events that support the mission. 🇺🇸

To find a post in your area or information on membership, visit www.utlegion.org or www.legion.org.



2015 Legislative Session

By Gary Harter, Executive Director
Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs

The 2015 Utah Legislative Session ended on 12 March. There were a number of actions that positively benefit Veterans, military members, and their families as well as our military organizations and installations. We enjoyed great support from legislators and the governor and we appreciate those who came to provide their input during committee hearings, engaging with legislators and providing ideas and thoughts during the bill process. Everyone working together is what makes Utah great. Below are some highlights from the session.

HB 36 — Veterans Definition

This piece of legislation puts Utah ahead of many other states. The Veterans and Military Affairs Commission discussed the provisions of this bill over many months. The members recognized that there were a number of Utahns who had served faithfully in the military at various times, primarily in the reserve components, but due to not being activated or not having previously served on active duty, were not considered Veterans by federal terms. This is very confusing and does not properly honor their service. The new definition says that, in Utah, a Veteran is an individual who has served in the United States Armed Forces for at least 180 days on active duty or in a reserve component to include the National Guard; or has incurred an actual service-related injury or disability while in the United States Armed Forces regardless of whether the individual completed 180 days; and was separated or retired under conditions characterized as honorable or general. This definition change is not intended to confer eligibility for state benefits (but we will look at those this next year) and it certainly has no bearing on federal benefits. It is a first step, but an important one, to recognize all of those who raised their hand and said they would serve others.

HB 233 — Military Education Amendments

Utah already offers in-state tuition rates for all Veterans attending state public academic institutions, and there

were no changes to that. There was, however, an issue reference as to residency requirement that needed to be met for those currently serving and some non-Veterans who were authorized use of the various G.I. Bill chapters, before qualifying for in-state tuition rates. The provisions of this bill essentially say if you are authorized to use Chapter 30, Montgomery G.I. Bill (Active Duty Educational Assistance Program) or Chapter 33, Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Program, under whichever category, in-state resident tuition rates apply at state public academic institutions. The code also altered the criteria for establishing resident student status.

HB 232 — Veteran Employment Protection Act

The vast majority of government entities in Utah have Veterans' hiring preference provisions. Private companies may desire to do the same, but there was a concern that if they do so, they could face legal action. This bill allows private, non-public employers to create a voluntary, Veterans employment preference program, and provides them protection under the law. It doesn't say they have to, but gives them protection to do so, and we encourage them to do such. Veterans make great employees.

HB 205 — Veteran Claim Assistance Disclosure

This is another hallmark bill for Utah in that it puts provisions in-place to ensure that the disability claims filing process is understood by all and adheres to federal rules. At its core, it provides that those who may be assisting a Veteran in filing for a disability claim must disclose to the veteran that whoever is providing the assistance is indeed compliant with federal laws governing assistance. It also includes a notification requirement for providers of assistance, requires the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs to keep a list of all accredited claims representatives and to contact them annually. There are also provisions to look into those that may not be in compliance. Over the next year, will be reaching out to Utah's Veterans to make them aware of the elements of this bill.

HB 211 — Armed Forces Property Tax Exemption Amendments

This bill standardizes the implementation of the property tax exemption across the state.

HB 217 — Uniformed Services Amendments

This adds a definition of armed forces and uniformed services to Utah code.

SB 13 — Income Tax Amendments

Exemptions provide a tax exemption for a combat-related death during the year of the death. This assists families during a very emotional time.

SB 214 — Veterans Courts

This bill capitalizes on the success of Veterans Courts that are already operating in communities and encourages establishment of them throughout Utah. There are now Veterans Courts at the local, state and federal levels.

HB 275 — Highway Designation Amendments

This designates Interstate 84 as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway in Utah.

SCR 6 — Concurrent Resolution Supporting Vietnam Veterans

SCR 6 expresses strong support for all military personnel who served and sacrificed during the Vietnam War. The resolution was co-sponsored by virtually every legislator and signed by Governor Herbert. Related to this is an effort to provide a commemorative book to Vietnam Veterans (which is under development), to recognize and thank them for their service, much like the commemorative book that was previously given to Korean War Veterans.

SJR 14 — Joint Resolution Supporting the Creation of a GI Bill for the Utah National Guard

This bill strongly urges the Legislature to recognize the valuable contribution that service members and Veterans make in the nation's defense and to support the creation of a Utah GI Bill of Rights.

HCR 10 — Concurrent Resolution on Basing and Infrastructure in Support of National and State Defense

HCR 10 urges support for moving Utah Air National Guard operations to HAFB. In addition, it acknowledges and urges the integration of Reserve, National Guard, and Active Duty military components; supports the strategic value and location of HAFB and the open air training and test ranges; and strongly encourages continuing Utah's legacy of collaborative support for national and state defense.

SCR 7 — Concurrent Resolution Regarding a Military Test Site in Western Utah

This concurrent resolution expresses support for a proposal to expand the Utah Test and Training Range provided that certain conditions are included in the final proposal. Those conditions protect the right to access and other interests of stakeholders including ranchers and recreationalists. The proposal includes the withdrawal of more than 625,643 acres of BLM land for use by the Air Force for expanded range safety zones. The proposal also consolidates School and Institutional Trust Lands parcels to enhance income producing potential of the land to benefit public schools.

SB 274 — Military Installation Development Authority Amendments

This bill modifies the Military Installation Development Authority Act's definitions and notice requirements and other minor technical changes. There were no fundamental changes in MIDA's organization or functioning provisions.

Issues related to the Utah National

Guard: HB 123 — Tuition and Fees Assistance expands allowable tuition assistance. HB 157 — Utah Code of Military Justice Amendments provides military commanders authority to look at violations of the code committed while on federal military status. HB 158 — Drill Status Travel Amendments amends the privilege from arrest or citation exceptions for members of the National Guard. HB 280 — Utah National Guard Command Structure Amendments updates the terms of usage for describing certain military positions. 🇺🇸



THE UTAH

VETERANS VOICE

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