



VETS NEWS ND

ND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

ISSUE 06 April 2016



Newsletter

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform readers of local events, community programs, Veteran-related news, and provide information on Veterans' benefits and other resources. This newsletter, in addition to our website and Facebook page, will keep Veterans and their families up-to-date on current events and hopefully serve as an informational guide to various topics, such as education benefits or filing claims.

North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Mission Statement

The mission of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is to assist veterans of North Dakota and their dependents in obtaining all benefits to which they are entitled, both federal and state, either by direct contact or through the assistance of the County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers.

North Dakota State Approving Agency Mission Statement

The North Dakota State Approving Agency works in cooperation with its partners; (1) to promote and safeguard quality education and training programs for all veterans and other eligible persons; (2) to ensure greater education and training opportunities that meet the changing needs of Veterans; and (3) to advocate and support the GI Bill® resources available for those programs.



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Sexual Assault Awareness Month

According to the Department of Veteran Affairs, 1 in 3 women will be victims of sexual assault during their military career. Additionally, 1 in 30 men will also be victims. Given the sheer number of men serving in our US Armed Forces, men have the highest rates of victimization.

The Department of Veteran Affairs has moved in a positive direction to address the symptoms caused by sexual assault. Many survivors struggle with PTSD, depression, anxiety, insomnia, and other issues that hinder reintegration into the civilian world. The VA has developed programming that increases access to counseling, medical care, and extends medical coverage beyond the 5 years eligibility after Active Duty in most cases. The VA has also created standardized forms that streamline the claims process for survivors as well, recognizing the significance of this type of trauma.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, a month that we celebrate survivors, applaud their resilience, and admire the work they do for others. It is also a time to challenge ourselves to become more educated about this important issue that continued to negatively impact veterans and their families. Resources are available for families and survivors to support them as they move forward through the health care system and claims process.

Locally, the Fargo VA offers counseling services and referral services through Susan Thompson, MST Coordinator, at the Fargo VA Medical Center at 701-232-3241 ext. 4523. You can also work with Calie Lindseth, the ND DVA Women's Veteran Coordinator for help navigating the claims system.

The North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs joins the growing collective voice of those fighting against sexual assault and remembering survivors who have lost their battles. We are also here to help others heal.



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Benefit Show Case-State Dependent Waiver

Are you a 100% Service Connected veteran who is a resident of North Dakota? Do your dependents need to go to school? If you qualify, your dependents can have 10 undergraduate semesters tuition free at any of the state schools in North Dakota.

The ND State Dependent Tuition Waiver is for veterans of North Dakota who activated for military service out of the state, or who have called North Dakota home for 10 years or more. The waiver is effective for any North Dakota State school such as NDSU, UND, BSC, etc. The veteran must be being paid at the 100% rate, either by 100% actual rating, or based of Individual Employability. This benefit can be used in conjunction with the Chapter 35 Dependent Education Assistance Program (Chapter 35) GI Bill as well!

To apply, you can contact your school's Certifying Official or our Department!

Found out more about the program at our website:

<https://www.nd.gov/veterans/benefits/nd-dependent-tuition-waiver>



The Watford City Veterans Park's mission is to plan, build, equip and maintain a park to honor veterans who have honorably served their country. This includes any period of service beginning with the American Revolution. We want to promote patriotism and to recognize veterans of all military forces, past, present and future. To make this project a reality, donations are being accepted to offer a stunning memorial, recognizing the State of North Dakota's veteran sacrifice.

Please consider donating to this great project! To learn more about this memorial, please head to the website at: <http://www.watfordcityveteranspark.com/#overview>

Or, the Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/veteransofnd/timeline>



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Thank you for your Service!

Tom Summers was recognized for his selfless dedication to the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs after almost a decade of service. Tom serves as the Veteran Service Officer Supervisor for the Department.

Tom is preparing to start his next journey as a Pastor, continuing to serve those in the most need. The ND County Veteran Service Officer Association named Tom a honorary life time member. The award was presented by Emily Cost of Trail County and Henry Gerving of Golden Valley County.

Tom will be missed by the department and hundreds of veterans, however, we are excited for his future!



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Training and Education

Twice a year, the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs hosts a Country Veteran Service Officer Training. This year, the training was hosted in Bismarck and trainers from the Wounded Warrior Project came to train.

CVSO's and Department VSO's completed training for claims using standardized forms, improving knowledge of the appeals process, and giving a great overview of the available benefits for veterans and their families.

The training also included updates from the Fargo VA Leadership Team (Lavonne Liversage-VA Director -picture lower right), members from Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSFV-center right), education benefits, state benefits, and loan and grants.

A new element to the training is including education on diverse veteran populations to increase cultural awareness. Manaja Hill, the Standing Rock Tribal CVSO, conducted a training that looked at the history of Native American veterans in the US Armed Forces.

The next training will be in October in Fargo!



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