



The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services

August, 2014

NMDVS Briefs State Veterans' Service Organization Leaders in Summer Quarterly Meeting



NMDVS Secretary Timothy Hale (top/center in photo) briefed leaders of state Veterans' Service Organizations (VSO's) at the Quarterly State VSO Commander's meeting on July 25 in Albuquerque.

Commanders, presidents and other leaders from state veterans' service organizations met on July 25 in Albuquerque for the Summer State VSO Commanders' meeting presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS). The quarterly gathering of VSO leaders presented an opportunity for NMDVS Secretary Timothy Hale to update the progress of veteran's initiatives in the state.

Speaking about the state's Veterans' Cemetery Initiative—the plan introduced by Governor Martinez to submit proposals to the VA for building four small veterans cemeteries in the state --Secretary Hale told the leaders that all four applications (from Carlsbad, Ft. Stanton, Gallup and Angel Fire) submitted to the VA's Cemetery Program Initiative have passed the initial stages of the application process, and are now proceeding to the Design & Engineering phase.

“All four were excellent submissions. All four communities are now underway with the initial engineering and design phases,” said Secretary Hale. “The next important deadline comes in late October or early November, when the VA is scheduled to release its list of prioritized cemetery projects for funding. We (NMDVS) will continue to monitor the process.”

NMDVS Deputy Secretary Alan Martinez provided an update on possible veteran-related legislation for the 2015 New Mexico Legislature. Among the most likely initiatives to be introduced or carried by members of the Veterans' Legislative Committee: **Improving outreach to veterans about the G.I. Education Bill, the transfer of Veteran Cemetery Income Tax Check-Off funds from state income tax returns to the State Veteran Cemetery Program, prioritizing the study of long-term care for veterans, funding of statewide Veterans' Business Incubators, and**—for the tenth consecutive year—introducing legislation to create a Military Retiree Income Tax Exemption.

This time, said Deputy Secretary Martinez, the effort will involve a partnership with the non-partisan public policy organization *New Mexico First* and its staff of public policy experts to help the cause of offering a phased-in state income tax exemption for military retirees.

“We are looking at hosting three to four town halls meetings in different venues to help us develop our latest version of a retiree tax exemption Bill,” said Deputy Secretary Martinez. “We will continue to aggressively reach out to legislators on both sides of the aisle—especially those who have been reluctant to vote for previous versions of the Bill—emphasizing how attracting talented military retirees to the state will help create jobs through the business ventures these retirees typically start in their post-military careers.”

(continued)

The summer quarterly meeting also provided a chance for acting New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Dr. James Robbins to brief the commanders about efforts to improve some procedures at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque.

Dr. Robbins devoted most of his hour-long presentation to the aftermath of a June 30 fatal heart attack **suffered by a veteran at a hospital cafeteria. He said that even though the staff went “by the book” in trying to revive the victim, some changes could be coming.**

“Most buildings on the (hospital) campus have defibrillators or ‘Crash Carts’ available for trained staff to utilize in such an emergency. Unfortunately, the cafeteria does not,” said Dr. Robbins. “We will look into installing “Crash Carts” at the cafeteria and any other high-use facility on campus which currently does not have one—and make sure that all staff will be trained to be able to use it.”

The final quarterly VSO State Commander/Leader meeting will be held in Santa Fe this fall—the date to be determined. The NMDVS will reveal the final slate of veteran-related Bills to be formally supported by the agency.



NMVAHCS Acting Director Dr. James Robbins addresses questions fielded by attendees at the State Veterans’ Commander Quarterly Meeting in Albuquerque on July 25 at the New Mexico Veterans’ Memorial Auditorium

Albuquerque’s New Mexico Veterans’ Memorial

The New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services is grateful to the staff at the New Mexico Veterans’ Memorial for allowing the use of the site for the July 25 VSO State Commander’s Meeting and many other agency-hosted events through the years. The facility is in need of volunteers to help with operations at the Visitor’s Center of the facility, located at 1100 Louisiana Blvd. SE (just north of Gibson Blvd.) Any person or organization willing to help is asked to contact Jim Lehner at (505) 256-2042 or lehnerjames@comcast.net



VA Acting Secretary Gibson Visits Albuquerque; Meets with NM VA Hospital Staff

Acting VA Secretary Sloan Gibson said he found no fault with the **Albuquerque Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center's** response when 71-year-old Vietnam Veteran Jim Napoleon Garcia collapsed and died from a heart attack on June 30 at the VA Medical Center cafeteria. Mr. Gibson visited the Albuquerque VA medical center to address employees on July 17. Though he said he understands the **emotions involved with Mr. Garcia's death, he said the response** was properly carried out according to national VA policy.

"I thanked every single one of them individually," said Mr. Gibson. "As I heard what they did, and I stood and looked at them in the eye, I was very proud."

The cafeteria, which is about 500 yards from the main hospital building, lies outside the response area for **the hospital's Code Blue Team**. Mr. Gibson said national VA policy dictates that, because the incident occurred outside the coverage area, local 911 must be called. Members from 377th Air Force medical unit from Kirtland Air Force Base happened to be in the cafeteria and quickly administered CPR. City of Albuquerque paramedics arrived about 11 minutes later.



City of Artesia Dedicates New Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)



Albuquerque VA Medical Center Acting Director Dr. James Robbins (third from right) joined veteran and city leaders to officially open the new Artesia Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) on July 3.

The new facility, located at 2410 West Main Street, will **provide checkups, routine lab tests, blood draws, EKG's, social work, and other primary and telehealth care service** to veterans in the Artesia area. To make an appointment, call (575) 746-3531. For a list of New Mexico's 15 CBOC's, go to <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp>

NMDVS, NMVAHCS and Other Agencies to Present Albuquerque Wellness Conference

Veterans, Guard/Reserve members, Active-Duty personnel and their spouses interested in learning more about available treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are encouraged to attend the free **2014 New Mexico Veterans' Wellness Conference in Albuquerque on Saturday, September 13 from 8am-5pm** at the Hotel Albuquerque.

More information—including details about a free \$40 Walmart Gift card for early registrants—will be on the NMDVS website shortly at http://www.dvs.state.nm.us/events_calendar.html or call (505) 827-6356.

NMDVS Conducts Training Seminar for Native American Tribal Veteran Representatives



Fifteen representatives from Native American tribes and nations in New Mexico successfully completed a Tribal Veteran Representative Training Seminar presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services from July 15-18 in Albuquerque.

The newly-certified representatives will assist the agency with its mission of increasing its outreach to the state's Native American veterans—helping with filing for VA and state veterans' benefits.

Back row, L to R: Joe Bird (Santo Domingo Pueblo), Michael Chinana (Jemez), Marcus Chavez (Acoma), Patrick Romero (Taos), Adrian Julien (Jicarilla Apache Nation), Marcus Lujan (Isleta), Kelton Starr (Mescalero Apache Tribe), Ulysses Abeita (Isleta).

Front row, L to R: Clyde Tenorio (Santo Domingo Pueblo), Carlene Aragon (Laguna), April Ruben (Laguna), Gloria Johnson (Ohkay Owingeh), Teresa Romero (Pojoaque), Allen Naranjo (Santa Clara), Sam Lovato (Santo Domingo).

NMDVS to Open Field Office in Grants



The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) will be opening a new field office in Grants/Cibola County in the coming weeks as part of an operations restructuring which involves moving NMDVS' base of operations in the west-central part of the state from Gallup.

The Grants office is in the Lobo Canyon Shopping Center, located at 700 Roosevelt Rd./Suite 14. The NMDVS is in the final stages of interviewing candidates for the Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) position. The office hours will remain the same as with all NMDVS field offices: 8am-4:30pm Mondays-Fridays. As with all offices, walk-ins are welcome—but veterans and dependents are advised to make an appointment. The phone number and E-mail address of the VSO will be released as soon as the hire is made. In the meantime, veterans or dependents needing help with their VA or state veterans' benefits can continue contacting the NMDVS Farmington office or the toll-free number at the main office in Santa Fe. The contact information for all seventeen NMDVS field offices can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

NMDVS Names New State Benefits Director



Salvador "Sal" Soto
NMDVS State Benefits Director

Salvador "Sal" Soto has been named the new Director of State Veterans' Benefits for the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services. He will be in charge of overseeing all operations and staff of the agency's State Veterans' Benefits division of the department.

Sal has an extensive background with the U.S. Armed Forces, state government, and in the private sector as the owner of a small business. Prior to coming to the NMDVS, the native of Carlsbad worked at the New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department and the New Mexico Department of Transportation in several managerial and supervisory capacities.

Most recently, Sal worked for the New Mexico National Guard/Department of Military Affairs, where he served as the curator of the Bataan Memorial Museum in Santa Fe. He retired from active duty with the New Mexico Army National Guard in 2002 as a Chief Warrant Officer-5. He's a graduate of the Army Adjutant General Advance Course and the Senior

Warrant Officer Staff College.

"I am extremely excited about working for the Department of Veterans' Services," said Sal. "I look forward to using my knowledge of the military and state government to help veterans and their families with their benefits needs."

More information can be found about New Mexico's state veterans on the NMDVS website at http://www.dvs.state.nm.us/benefits_services.html. Sal can be reached at (505) 827-6374 or

SF National Cemetery Director Conducts Veterans' Burial Benefit Workshops

Santa Fe National Cemetery Director James Sanders held hour-long **Veterans' Burial Informational Workshops** on July 23 in Santa Fe at the Bataan Memorial Building. The workshops were held every hour from 8am to 5pm, giving veterans or spouses ample opportunity to learn more about the procedures involved in requesting a veterans' burial at a national cemetery.

"I received a lot of inquiries about eligibility, how to go about arranging for a veterans' funeral, and burial space availability at the Santa Fe cemetery," said Mr. Sanders. "Since the event, I have received calls on when I will do this again. I am very happy about the positive response from the community, and am hoping to do an event in Albuquerque and elsewhere in a couple of months."

For more information about veterans' funerals, contact SF National Cemetery Director James Sanders at (505) 988-6400 or james.sanders2@va.gov.



Santa Fe National Cemetery Director James Sanders (top/center) addresses one of the morning Veterans' Cemetery Workshops in Santa Fe on July 23.

City of Roswell Dedicates Veterans' Cemetery



Local dignitaries, state legislators, NMDVS Secretary Timothy Hale and Roswell-area veterans were among the hundreds of people on hand for the dedication and official opening of the **General Douglas L. McBride Roswell Veterans' Cemetery** on July 4.

The 20-acre cemetery is located adjacent to the city's South Park Cemetery. It is named after the longtime resident and civic leader of the city who served 37-years on active-duty and in the reserves with the U.S. Army. General McBride saw WWII combat action in Italy.

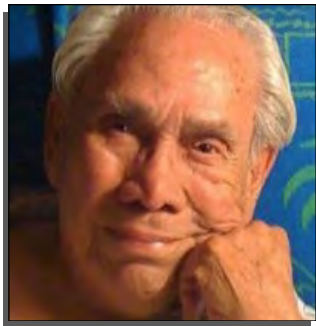


The city-owned facility was made possible by the donation of 20-acres of land by the McBride Family Foundation—as well as local resident Ray Willis, who donated \$20,000 to the effort.

Initial plans call for the maintaining of one acre, with future development based according to need.



Bataan Death March Survivor Passes Away in Albuquerque



Faustino M. Olguin

Bataan Death March Survivor Faustino M. Olguin was buried with full military honors on July 25 at the Mt. Calvary Cemetery in his hometown of Albuquerque. He was 95 years old and had passed away on July 18 after a long illness.

Mr. Olguin served with the New Mexico National Guard's A Battery, 515th Coast Artillery Regiment in the Philippines during World War II and was among the 1,800 members of the NMNG—who in turn were part of more than 75,000 American and Filipino soldiers ordered by their superiors to surrender to Japanese Forces on April 9, 1942. The two countries had engaged in a four-month defense of the Philippines after Japan's surprise December 7, 1941 attack on the Philippines and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The prisoners were forced to march more than 60 torture-filled miles from the Bataan Peninsula to eventual confinement in Japanese prison camps. Many were denied food, water or medical care along the way; many were stabbed or bayoneted along the 65-mile route.

Upon coming home after the war ended, Mr. Olguin served 26-years with the United States Postal Service. His death leaves 28 remaining Bataan Death March survivors—14 of which live in New Mexico.

Medal of Honor Recipient Leroy Petry to Receive Free Harley-Davidson at Special Albuquerque Ceremony

Medal of Honor Recipient and Retired U.S. Army Master Sergeant Leroy Petry will be the recipient of yet another special honor on August 28 in Albuquerque.

The Santa Fe native will be presented with a Harley Davidson “Tri-Glide Ultra Classic” three-wheel motorcycle in a special 11am ceremony at Thunderbird Harley Davidson, located at 5000 Alameda Blvd. NE.

The new three-wheel deluxe “ride” is being presented in honor of MSG Petry’s service and sacrifice to our country by the *Run For The Wall/New Mexico Organizing Committee* along with a coalition of appreciative local veterans and citizens.

Sgt. Petry was awarded the Medal of Honor—our nation’s highest combat award—for his heroic actions on the battlefield on May 26, 2008 in Paktia Province, Afghanistan. On that date, then-Staff Sergeant Petry—who was serving his seventh Post-9/11 combat tour-- was credited with saving the lives of his pinned-down fellow Army Rangers by picking up a “live” enemy grenade tossed at his unit’s location. The grenade detonated just as Petry was about to toss it away—resulting in the loss of his right hand and several serious shrapnel-related injuries, but saving his life and those of his nearby fellow soldiers.



MSG Leroy Petry (USA-Retired)

SSG Petry has been fitted with a special high-tech prosthetic hand. He was presented with the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama at a special White House ceremony on July 12, 2011—becoming only the second living recipient of the award since the Vietnam War. He is just the ninth MOH recipient since the dawn of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, and just the 13th recipient from New Mexico. SSG Petry re-enlisted with the Army in 2010 and served as a liaison officer for the U.S. Special Operations Command/Northwest Region before being promoted to Master Sergeant and then retiring from nearly fifteen years of service last week (July 29, 2014).

For more information, contact Barbara Montoya at (505) 250-6495.

Walk Across America



Marine Corporal Justin Kuhel’s *March Across America* will take him through New Mexico later this month. The 2,700-mile trek, which began May 23 at Camp Lejeune, NC, is meant to raise awareness and funding for “Raise our Heroes” and “Help Our Military Heroes”—two organizations which help wounded post-war military veterans. Justin is scheduled to be greeted by motorcycle riders from the *Patriot Guard Riders* at the NM-TX state line. On August 26, PGR Riders are scheduled to escort him down Central Avenue in Albuquerque on his way to ceremony at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial, located at 1100 Louisiana



Bld. SE. Justin will be travelling through our state for approximately three weeks--before reaching his final destination of Camp Pendleton in San Diego County (California) in late October. For more information, go to <http://www.marchacrossamerica.org/>

CYFD, Human Services Department, State Personnel Office to Present Career Fair



The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) and the New Mexico State Personnel Office are teaming up to host a Career Fair on August 12 from 8am-noon

at the New Mexico State Personnel Office, located in the Willie Ortiz Building in Santa Fe at 2600 Cerrillos Road. Veterans looking for employment are strongly encouraged to attend.



CYFD and HSD are looking to fill nearly 200 positions in various locations statewide. Job seekers with experience in social services are encouraged to attend. Those with degrees in social work, sociology, education, family studies, criminal justice, counseling, psychology or other social services fields of study are especially encouraged to attend. For more information, contact CYFD at (505) 827-7602 or HSD at (505) 476-6230.

Aviation & Aerospace Career Expo for Students to be Held in Albuquerque on September 17



The New Mexico Air National Guard (NMANG) is teaming with the New Mexico Aviation Aerospace Association to host ***The New Mexico Aviation Aerospace Career Expo*** for middle-school through college-age students on September 17 from 9am-3pm at the New Mexico Air National Guard hangar on Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque.

This event provides an opportunity for students to meet and engage with today's leaders of New Mexico's aviation and aerospace industry. The focus will emphasize the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through a direct hands-on interaction with industry leaders, higher education institutions with aviation programs, flight training schools, military displays and numerous military and civilian aircraft. All exhibitors—including the aircraft displayed on site—will be manned and ready to engage all participants. Registration is limited, so please register early at www.NMAAA.net or through the Expo Hot Line at (505) 846-3098. For further information, contact NMANG Capt. Brian Raphael at (505) 553-1427 or brian.j.raaphael.mil@mail.mil.

Bataan Memorial Military Museum in Santa Fe to Celebrate 20th Anniversary With Historical Designation



The New Mexico National Guard/Bataan Memorial Military Museum will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a special public noon ceremony on Saturday, August 9 at the museum, located in Santa Fe at 1050 Old Pecos Trail.

The building will be officially designated as an historical site with the National Historic Registry. It is the actual armory where soldiers of the 200th and 515th Coast Artillery Regiments--military units directly tied with the defense of Bataan and the infamous Bataan Death March --were processed before their deployment to the Philippines in the early stage of World War II. For more information, contact NMNG Capt. Brian Raphael at (505) 553-1427 or brian.j.raaphael.mil@mail.mil.

“American Veterans for Equal Rights” to Host Annual Summer Gathering

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) will hold its annual end-of-summer meeting and party this Saturday (August 9) from 11am-3pm at a private residence in the Glenwood Hills area of Albuquerque. Members and those wishing to join are encouraged to bring guests. A short business meeting will kick off the event, as will the presentation of the annual AVER awards will be handed out. Afterwards the large swimming pool will be open—as will the BBQ grill for burgers and hot dogs. For directions to the event and to RSVP, call (505) 688-1652 or (505) 401-4186.



Veterans Spiritual/Healing Retreat to be Held in Albuquerque



Veterans, active-duty personnel, spouses, family members and friends are invited to attend *Healing The Warrior Within*, a veterans’ **“Healing Retreat” on August 16 from 8am-8pm** at the Canossian Spirituality Center in Albuquerque, located at 5625 Isleta Blvd. SW. The retreat is presented by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Catholic War Veterans, Veterans Task Force, and Partners in Care. The cost is \$30 per person. Breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack and dinner will be provided.

The Healing Retreat seeks to heal the soul via prayer, healing, compassion and peace in a religious setting. Attendees can expect to focus on positive personal change, reconnect to your true self, learn and practice methods to better yourself and your life, relax at a deep level, rejuvenate your spirit, take time for reflection, gain clarity on an issue or your life path, find meaning in your life beyond daily or material concerns, heal, practice your faith, create and contemplate. For more information, call (505) 831-8174.

Women Veterans Encouraged to Apply for Women Wildland Firefighter Training Program



The USDA Forest Service/Southwest Region is seeking career-focused women to be on-call Wildland Fire Fighters for the 2015 fire season. These on-call positions will provide support to Wildland fire operations over the summer, when needed, and can help pave the way for future employment and career advancement in the Forest Service.

Veterans are strongly encouraged to apply.

The deadline for application is August 17. You will be expected to take written and physical tests. The main duty stations will be in Arizona and New Mexico. While on wildland fire assignments, you may be expected to be away from your home for an extended period of time—and can expect to be housed in primitive living conditions such as camping in wilderness areas. For more information, contact the USDA Forest Service/Albuquerque office at (505) 842-3292.



NMDVS, New Mexico National Guard to Host Annual Honor Guard Training Conference

The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services along with the New Mexico Department of Military Affairs are presenting their annual *Honor Guard Training Conference* on August 22 at the **New Mexico Veterans' Memorial in Albuquerque**. The conference begins at 8am with presentations and updates about the Honor Guard Program. The conference then moves outdoors for a demonstration and training by The New Mexico National Guard Honor Guard Team, followed by a competition between registered Honor Guard Teams.



The 2013 Honor Guard Training Conference

The NMDVS established the state's Military Honors Burial Program to ensure that, upon death, all honorably-discharged veterans will be buried with the honor and dignity befitting of a man or woman who has honorably served our country with the United States Armed Forces. The NMDVS is committed to supervising all-volunteer Honor Guard Teams throughout the state to provide this **Final Salute at a veteran's funeral**. **These teams feature trained uniformed men and women to perform the ceremonial funeral duties of covering and uncovering of a casket with an American Flag, the folding and presentation of the flag to a family member, a 21-Rifle Salute, and the playing of Taps by a military bugler.** This service is provided free to the family of any deceased honorably-discharged veteran. The NMDVS ensures that all units undergo training, are provided with uniforms and equipment, and are provided with a small stipend for each service performed. Please contact the nearest Honor Guard Team listed below to make arrangements.

A free hot lunch will be provided for all attendees and participants. For further questions, or if you are interested in forming an Honor Guard Team, please contact Josetta Rodriguez at (505) 827-6356 or josetta.rodriguez@state.nm.us.

Planning Meeting Set for “Military & Veterans Day at the NM State Fair



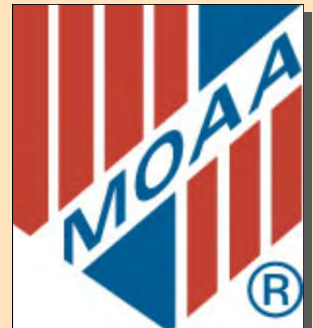
Veterans’ Service Organizations, service providers, agencies and others who wish to be a part of the 2014 *Military & Veterans Appreciation Day at the State Fair* are invited to attend a planning meeting on Wednesday, August 13 at 1:30pm at American Legion Post 13 in Albuquerque. The purpose is to discuss the rules and regulations which apply to all organizations wanting to **have a table, booth or other display along “Main Street”** at the fairgrounds on Military & Veterans Day at the State Fair—which this year has been set for September 17. For more information, contact Josetta Rodriguez at (505) 827-6356 or Josetta.rodriguez@state.nm.us.

MOWW, MOAA to Co-Host “Patriotic Picnic”

Military Order of the World Wars and *Military Officers Association of America* are teaming to host a “Patriotic Picnic” on August 23 at 11am at Hyde Memorial State Park, located about halfway to the Santa Fe Ski Basin off Hyde Park Road.



The picnic will be at Site #1, located approximately 7 ¾ miles from the Artist Road/Hyde Park Road intersection at Ft. Marcy Park in Santa Fe. Attendees are asked to bring food to share. Beverages, plates, cups, utensils, condiments and charcoal briquettes will be provided. There is a \$5 per vehicle parking fee.



Veterans, Public Invited to Annual Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 996 “Matanza”

Veterans, active-duty personnel, their friends and families and the general public are invited to attend the Sixth Annual *Matanza* in Santa Fe on September 18 at 5pm presented by Vietnam Veterans of America/ Northern New Mexico Chapter 996. The event will be at the Santa Fe Elks Lodge, located at 1615 Old Pecos Trail.

Tickets are \$10 per person. Persons 16 years old and under are admitted free. In addition to all of the typically delicious food & dishes found at a northern New Mexico *Matanza*, there will be “live” music and free horse rides for kids. All proceeds go to the VVANM Chapter 996 General Fund. For advance ticket purchases and more information, call (505) 603-8639 or (505) 501-2814.



Six Homeless Veteran “Stand Downs” Scheduled for October in New Mexico



Homeless and near-homeless veterans and their families will be able to get free clothing, backpacks, blankets, meals, health screening and **numerous services at “Stand Downs” for homeless veterans** scheduled in six New Mexico communities this Fall. The locations and dates are as follows: Artesia on September 27, Gallup Community Center on October 3, Farmington/San Juan College on October 10, Albuquerque/Noon Day Ministries on October 16 & 17, Santa Fe University of Art & Design on October 24 & 25, and Durango, CO on November 15. The hours for all Stand Downs are 9am-4pm. Food, clothing and other items are still needed. For donations and more information, contact New Mexico Veterans Integration Center Director Elinor Reiners at (505) 265-0512 or elinor.reiners@nmvic.org. More details will be provided in future editions of *The Guardian* and on the NMDVS website.

Golf Tournament to Benefit Northern NM “Honor Flight” Program

The Williamson Foundation of New Mexico is hosting its Second Annual Northern New Mexico Honor Flight Program Benefit Golf Tournament on October 22 at the Isleta Eagle Golf Course just south of Albuquerque.

The event kicks off with a “Morning Shotgun” at 9am. Prizes will be offered for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Entry fees are \$125 for single players or \$500 for a foursome. There are also corporate and individual sponsorships available from \$500-\$3,500. All proceeds benefit the Northern New Mexico Honor Flight Program, which flies America’s military veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at their war-era national memorials. For more information, contact Brandy Smotts at (505) 814-7800.



Photos are from the inaugural northern New Mexico Honor Flight on June 4, 2014 from Albuquerque’s International Sunport to the National WW II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Honor Flight of Southern NM/El Paso in Need of Funding for Scheduled October Trip



2011 Honor Flight of Southern NM/El Paso Trip

Honor Flight of Southern New Mexico and El Paso is seeking financial donations to help fly 57 southern New Mexico and El Paso-area veterans on its next Honor Flight scheduled for October.

As with all honor flight participants, the veterans—WWII veterans in their 80s and 90s—are scheduled to make their trip to Washington, D.C. to visit the World War II Memorials and other sights in. The flight, lodging and meals are free—but are paid for by the Honor Flight organization and its partners.

According to Honor Flight of Southern New Mexico/El Paso spokeswoman Debra Melcher, grants which would have covered the cost of the flight did not come through this year--so local donations are needed. Melcher said a

\$1,000 donation will cover about 70-percent of the cost for a veteran to take the trip—but that the group welcomes any amount.

Donations can be mailed to:

Honor Flight/care of the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico
301 S. Church St., Suite H,
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Donation forms and additional information can be found on the organization's website at www.honorflightnm.com. You can also call Debra Melcher at (575) 202-6366.

Got a Veteran-Related Event Coming Up??

The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) is happy to help get the word out through *The Guardian* about upcoming veteran-related events in your community. Please provide all pertinent information such as name of event, date, time, venue, admission cost, purpose of event, flyers, news releases, etc...as well as a phone number or E-mail address of a person to be published for contact about further information. Please E-mail all information to ray.seva@state.nm.us—ensuring that it is sent in a timely manner.

DISCLAIMER

Publication of an event in *The Guardian* is done solely as a “community service” for New Mexico’s veteran population. Unless stated, the NMDVS does not assume partnerships with organizations or support of any event sent for publication in *The Guardian*. Responsibility for the purpose or staging of an event lies solely with the source sending event notifications to the NMDVS. Publication of an event in *The Guardian* does not necessarily reflect the views of the NMDVS or the state of New Mexico. The NMDVS will not publish any event notifications sent without a Point-of-Contact and supporting contact information. The NMDVS reserves the right to withhold publication of an event.

Robert McDonald Unanimously Confirmed as VA Secretary



**VA Secretary
Robert McDonald**



The U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed former Procter & Gamble CEO Robert McDonald as the new Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The July 29 vote was a swift, bipartisan action by the Senate and is seen as a sign of the importance placed by Congress to addressing the **VA's pressing problems.** President

Barack Obama had nominated McDonald on June 30, and the Senate Veterans Affairs gave him a warm reception during his confirmation hearing last week.

McDonald replaces acting VA Secretary Sloan Gibson, who led the department since former VA chief Eric Shinseki resigned in late-May amid reports of falsified scheduling records and extensive treatment delays at several VA medical centers.

During his confirmation hearing, McDonald promised to transform the VA **and correct its systematic failures.** **"I desperately want this job, because I think I can make a difference,"** he said. **"The seriousness of the moment demands urgent action. The VA is in crisis. The veterans are in need. There is a lot of work to do to transform the department, and it will not be easy, but it is essential--and can be achieved."**

McDonald said he would work to improve communications within the sprawling VA nationwide network, which is the second-largest department in the federal government. He also said he would travel extensively to field offices across the country, and exchange contact information with members of the congressional committees that oversee the agency.

Members of both parties have praised McDonald's leadership credentials and his military experience. He graduated in the top 2 percent of his class at West Point and served as an Army paratrooper for five years before taking an entry-level job at P&G and moving up the ranks of the company.

"This is the type of leader we need at the VA at this crucial time," Sen. Richard Burr (N.C.), the ranking Republican on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said during a floor speech on Tuesday. Veterans groups also **expressed support for McDonald's confirmation.** **American Legion national commander Daniel Dellinger** said he is confident the new secretary will **"apply his experience leading big, complex business operations to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a complex operation that desperately needs a system-wide overhaul."**

For more news from the VA and for benefits information, visit www.va.gov

The VA has a regional office in Albuquerque. For more Information: www.benefits.va.gov/albuquerque

For information about VA health care, visit the website of the New Mexico VA Health Care System at: www.albuquerque.va.gov

NMDVS FIELD OFFICES

There are seventeen field offices of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services offices throughout the state to assist veterans and their eligible dependents with filing for VA and state veterans benefits. Each office is managed by a nationally-certified *Veterans' Service Officer* who is committed to helping fellow veterans with filing for the benefits earned through their service and sacrifice for our country.

Please contact your nearest office to set up an appointment. For additional information, you can also contact the main NMDVS office in Santa Fe toll-free at 1-(866) 433-8387 or by visiting our website at www.dvs.state.nm.us.

ALAMOGORDO

Tony Woodards
411 10th Street # 107
Alamogordo, NM 88310
(575) 437-4635

anthony.woodards@state.nm.us

ALBUQUERQUE #1

Dale Movius
5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113
(505) 827-383-2404

dalej.movius@state.nm.us

ALBUQUERQUE #2

Jeff George
500 Gold Ave. SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 346-4873

jeff.george@state.nm.us

CARLSBAD

Dagmar Youngberg
305 E. Fiesta Drive
Carlsbad, NM
(575) 885-4939

dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us

CLOVIS

Matthew Barela
904 W. 6th Street
Clovis, NM 88101
(575) 762-6185

matthew.barela@state.nm.us

FARMINGTON

Charlotte Atso
101 W. Animas St., Rm # 104
Farmington, NM 87401
(505) 327-2861

charlotte.atso@state.nm.us

GRANTS

(Vacant)

700 Roosevelt Ave./Suite 14
Grants, NM 87020
contact the NMDVS office
toll-free at 1-(866) 433-8387

HOBBS

Dalton Boyd
2120 N. Alto Street
Hobbs, NM 88240
(575) 397-5290

dalton.boyd@state.nm.us

LAS CRUCES #1

J.R. Turner
2024 E. Griggs Ave.
Las Cruces, NM 88001
(575) 524-6220

jr.turner@state.nm.us

LAS CRUCES #2

George Vargas
2024 E. Griggs Ave.
Las Cruces, NM 88001
(575) 524-6124

george.vargas@state.nm.us

LAS VEGAS

Karen Abeyta
917 Douglas Avenue
Las Vegas, NM 87701
(505) 454-0068

karen.abeyta@state.nm.us

LOS LUNAS

Theresa Zuni
1000 Main St. Cottage # 4
Los Lunas, NM 87031
(505) 841-5346

theresa.zuni@state.nm.us

RATON

Gary Fresquez
200 N. 3rd St.
Raton, NM 87740
(575) 445-8282

gary.fresquez@state.nm.us

RIO RANCHO

Gordon Schei
3200 Civic Center Circle
Rio Rancho, NM 87144
(505) 892-2408

gordon.schei@state.nm.us

ROSWELL

Richard Moncrief
500 N. Richardson Ave./Rm # 255
Roswell, NM 88201
(575) 624-6086

richard.moncrief@state.nm.us

SANTA FE

David Smith
407 Galisteo Street/Room 134
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 827-6355

davidd.smith@state.nm.us

TAOS

Michael Pacheco
120 Civic Plaza
Taos, NM 87571
(575) 758-9624

michael.pacheco1@state.nm.us

SILVER CITY

(Vacant)

For assistance, please call
the NMDVS
Toll-Free at 1-(866) 433-8387

reggie.price@state.nm.us