



# DMVA

North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

## ON POINT NEWSLETTER

## December 2021 Newsletter

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### #ICYMI

#### President Biden and First Lady Biden attended a "Friendsgiving" Dinner at Fort Bragg

On November 22 as part of the [White House's Joining Forces Initiative](#). About 250 troops and families of deployed soldiers were served mashed potatoes and stuffing to accompany the turkey, ham and other Thanksgiving fare prepared by the Robert Irvine Foundation, a nonprofit founded in 2014 to support veterans and veteran causes by celebrity chef Robert Irvine.

Along with the president and First Lady, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper and his wife Kristin Cooper attended the dinner. Also in attendance were NCDMVA Secretary Walter Gaskin, Fayetteville Mayor Mitch Colvin, and North Carolina U.S. Representatives David Price, G.K. Butterfield, Alma Adams, Deborah Ross and Kathy Manning.



Photo Credit: AP via Daily Mail (11/22/2021)

[View Article](#)

## NCDMVA At Work



### NC Governor's Working Group: Social Determinants of Veteran Suicide Series Continues through January

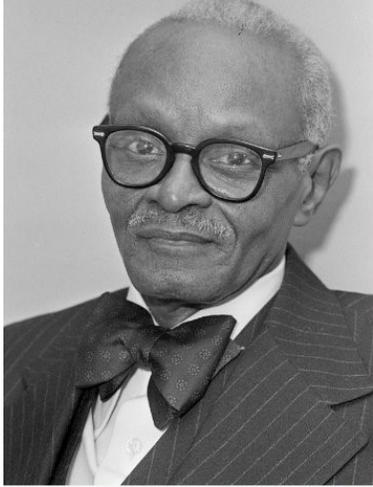
In November, the [NC Governor's Working Group](#) continued a five-part series on the Social Determinants of Veteran Suicide. This series will run through January 2022 and will feature a deep dive into one of the most critical issues facing Veterans today.

Watch Part 3 in the series on the "The Role of Trauma" [here](#) and mark your calendar for Part 4, "Resulting Instabilities" on December 16th. [Learn more.](#)

[Visit our website](#)

## DMVA Public Service Announcements

John R. Larkins Award



**NOMINATE A STATE  
EMPLOYEE WHO  
EXEMPLIFIES THE LARKINS  
COMMITMENT TO  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**DEADLINE: DEC. 28**

**VISIT:  
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/30MJPEF](https://bit.ly/30MJPEF)**

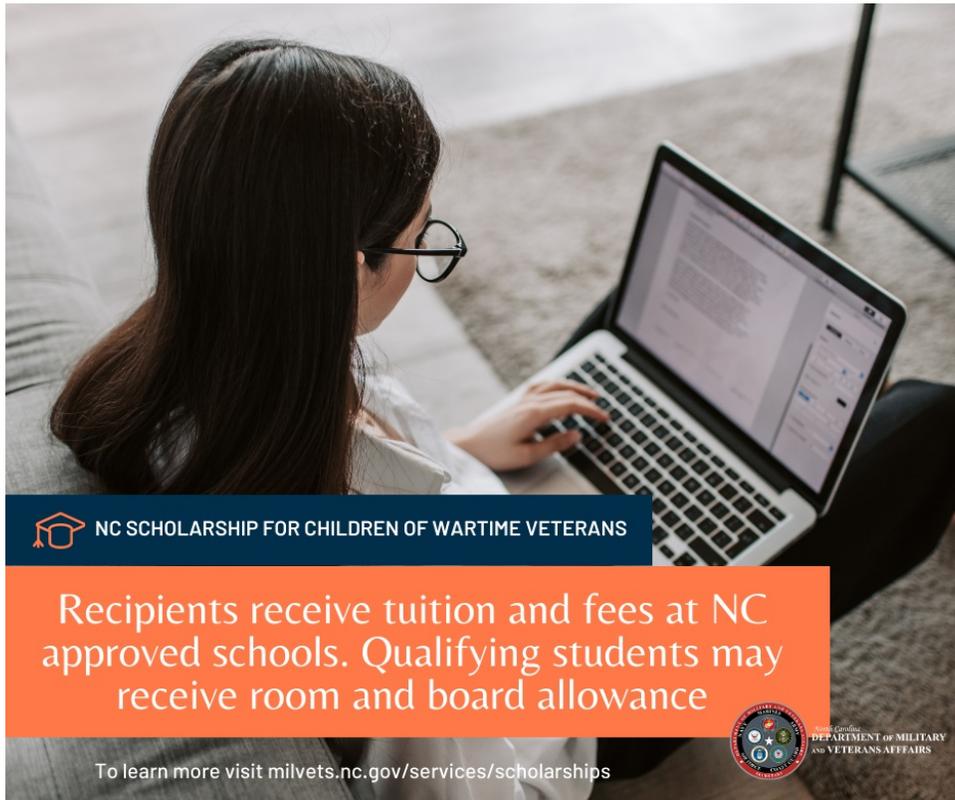
**2022 John R.  
Larkins Award for  
Human Services**

**HONOREE WILL BE  
ANNOUNCED JAN. 14 DURING  
THE STATE EMPLOYEES  
MLK JR. OBSERVANCE**

Nominations Sought for 2022 John R. [Larkins Award for Human Services](#)

**Learn  
more**

**Apply: NC Scholarship for Children of Wartime Veterans**



 **NC SCHOLARSHIP FOR CHILDREN OF WARTIME VETERANS**

**Recipients receive tuition and fees at NC approved schools. Qualifying students may receive room and board allowance**

To learn more visit [milvets.nc.gov/services/scholarships](http://milvets.nc.gov/services/scholarships)



**More information**



## It's that time again Toys for Tots

NCDMVA is collecting donations for this year's Toys for Tots drive. Please drop off new, unwrapped toys and books at NCDMVA ([413 N Salisbury St, Raleigh, NC 27603](#) or [Dobbs Bldg. 430 N. Salisbury St.](#)) before Dec. 15, 2021.

Donations may be dropped off Monday - Friday, 9am to 4pm. Visit the [Toys for Tots Website](#) for more information.

Call NCDMVA at 844-624-8387 with questions.

## Is it time to get your COVID-19 booster?

The CDC recommends anyone 18 years or older who received the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine get a booster six months after their second dose to help strengthen and extend protections against COVID-19.

The FDA authorized the boosters for such use last Friday.

The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 booster was made available in late October and is recommended for individuals ages 18 and older who were vaccinated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago.

**Full details:** <http://ncdhhs.gov/.../covid-19-booster-shots-now..>

[More Information](#)

## Extension of Gulf War Presumptive Period

The Department of Veteran Affairs has extended the presumptive period for qualifying chronic disabilities resulting from undiagnosed illnesses in Persian Gulf War Veterans to December 31, 2026. To learn more about VA and Gulf War Veterans, click [here](#).

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More information

## Join VA's Education Network

Join VA's GI Bill® network by applying for education benefits. You'll gain access to tools and funding that help you pursue your educational and career goals, no toggling or troubleshooting needed.

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

### Connect with your benefits

here: <https://bit.ly/3clmlxL>

## You are not alone. Connect with Care Now

VA's top clinical priority is preventing suicide among all Veterans — including those who do not, and may never, seek care within the VA health care system. As a Veteran, you can play a role in fulfilling this mission, and VA can equip you with tools to do your part. You can explore [suicide prevention resources](#) to build networks of support among community-based organizations, Veterans Service Organizations, health care providers, and other members of your community that strengthen protective factors for Veterans.



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## #MiVetsNC Leaderboard

### Colonel Martin Falls: NCDMVA bid farewell to one of its own

After three years and 5 months of being second in command at the North Carolina Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (NCDMVA), Chief Deputy Secretary Martin Falls is hanging up his boots and retiring.

Falls spent most of his career either in the military or working on behalf of veterans across the state and felt it was time to share himself with his family. "I want them to get the best of me right now," Falls said, "not the rest of me." He also plans on fishing, playing golf and spending mornings at the local Hardees sipping coffee with fellow Veterans he calls friends.

As far as what he is taking away from all this, Falls said it is two-fold. First, he walks away knowing he has done the best job he could do for North Carolina Veterans who as he puts it, "Are near and dear to me."

Secondly, he said he hopes that people remember him as a public servant, a passionate Veteran advocate and most of all a man of humility.

Martin is leaving an incredible mark on our work and on North Carolina's Military and Veteran communities as a whole. We are all so grateful for that. Martin, congratulations on your retirement!



Chief Deputy Secretary of NCDMVA, Martin Falls

### Terry Westbrook: A National Guardsman leading the way for Veterans Services in North Carolina

NCDMVA is proud to have strong representation from the United States National Guard among its



staff. This month, in honor of the National Guard's 385th birthday we are featuring NCDMVA Director of Veteran Services, Terry Westbrook, a 35-year veteran of the National Guard.

Terry enlisted back in 1982 when he was a junior in college. At the time he knew little of the National Guard enlisted while working as an

inventory clerk at a local business.

He spent the next 35 years in the guard, deploying four times; twice to Iraq and ending his career as a Chief Warrant Officer CW4. In those years Westbrook said the National Guard taught him how to laser focus in on a problem to find an answer for it. "Take the problem apart," he said, "find the right way to execute a solution and put it back together."

He said he has brought that tunnel vision to his current job which he accepted after retiring from the National Guard. Westbrook said he always wanted to help people and since he had the experience from his military service, he applied it to his next career with NCDMVA.

Westbrook says he has many memories of his time in the National Guard, but one of his most vivid revolves around a rocket attack in Iraq in 2004. The attack, outside a post exchange, killed two soldiers. The post had a CNN crew embedded, and they reported the news before the military had time to react. Westbrook's wife saw the report and knew Westbrook was in that area but could not reach him. "She lived through Hell for several hours before I could get through to her," Terry said.

As far as what he'd tell others wanting to join the National Guard he says, "It is one of the best public servant jobs you can have but be prepared to invest yourself for the long haul if you really want to get more than weekend warrior experience out of it."

## Nominate a Service Member, Veteran for #MilVetsNC Leaderboard



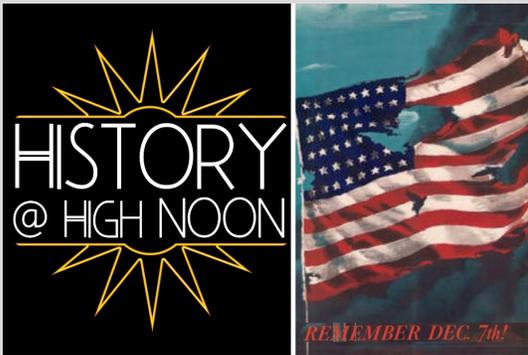
DMVA's monthly #MilVetsNC Leaderboard feature is an opportunity to highlight NC service members, veterans, and those who work on their behalf.

It's easy, all it takes is one (1) email to [publisher@milvets.nc.gov](mailto:publisher@milvets.nc.gov) with some background on why this veteran, service member, or military veteran advocate should be featured. Please include 1-3 high-resolution photos.

# Save the Date

## Dec 1: Happy 73rd Birthday to the U.S. Civil Air Patrol

Since Civil Air Patrol's formation during the earliest days of World War II, this vigilant organization of citizen Airmen has been committed to service to America. As a Total Force partner and auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, Civil Air Patrol is there to search for and find the lost, provide comfort in times of disaster and work to keep the homeland safe. Its 56,000 members selflessly devote their time, energy, and expertise toward the well-being of their communities, while also promoting aviation and related fields through aerospace/STEM education and helping shape future leaders through CAP's cadet program.



[Register here!](#)

## Dec 7 @ 12pm: History at High Noon: December 1941: North Carolina Responds to Pearl Harbor

December 7, 2021, marks the 80th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (Oahu Island, Hawaii), the event that drew the United States into World War II. North Carolinians were already serving in the nation's military, and several of them were present for the historic attack. Peek will share some of their stories, as well as talk about the reaction to the military assault back home. The morning after the attack, young men—some too young for military service—had lined up outside recruitment stations. Across the state, citizens of all backgrounds and ages banded together to support the war effort. Using primary sources from the State Archives collection, Matthew Peek will provide insights into how the events from eight decades ago continue to touch the lives of so many North Carolinians.

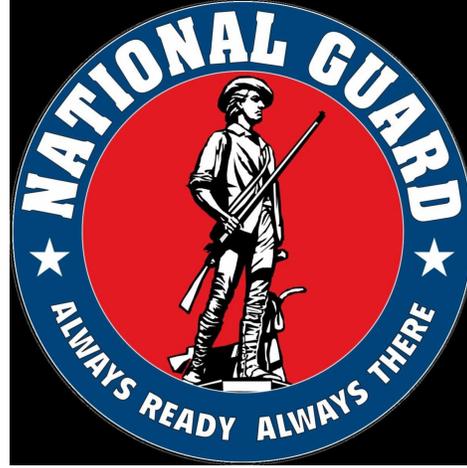
## Dec 13: Happy 118th Birthday to the U.S. National Guard

Since 1636: Always Ready, Always There.

On December 13th the National Guard celebrates its 385th birthday, marking a historic year of support its communities.

The National Guard can deploy for both state and federal missions, in times of war and emergency. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the men and women of the North Carolina National Guard served various roles, from assisting at hospitals to boosting the state's COVID-19 vaccination efforts.

On December 13th, take time to honor those who have protected our country for centuries.



<https://www.nationalguard.com/>



Click the links below for information about Wreaths Across America events at NCDMVA's four State Veterans Cemeteries:

- **Dec 16:** [Wreaths Across America – Coastal Carolina State Veterans Cemetery \(NCCVCJ\)](#)
- **Dec 18:** [Wreaths Across America – Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery – Fort Bragg \(NCSVSL\)](#)
- **Dec 18:** [Wreaths Across American - Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery – Black Mountain \(NCWCBM\)](#)
- **Dec 18:** [Wreaths Across America – Eastern Carolina State Veterans Cemetery \(NCECSV\)](#)

For a full list of Wreaths Across America events across North Carolina [visit our website.](#)

For more information about Wreaths Across America visit [wreathscrossamerica.org](http://wreathscrossamerica.org).

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## WISHES FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

Happy Holidays from the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. We wish you a bright, prosperous, and healthy 2021.



## Community Calendar

- Dec 7 [Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day](#)
- Dec 7 [The Best Small Business to Start Right Now! Webinar](#)
- Dec 8 [Tour Veterans Bridge Home's new space w/ Crisis Intervention Team, Charlotte](#)
- Dec 10 2021 [Army & Air National Guard Tar Heel Retiree Homecoming, Raleigh](#)
- Dec 10 [Axes and Cocoa Bombs - Active, Guard, Reserve, Charlotte](#)
- Dec 11 [USO 9th Annual Toys for Our Troops - Active, Guard, Reserve , Charlotte](#)
- Dec 13 [National Guard Birthday](#)
- Dec 13-17 [Patriots Path Workshop](#)
- Dec 17 [National Wreaths Across America Day](#)

Click here for more events



North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

The North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NC DMVA) supports both active and reserve uniformed military personnel and their families; military installations and communities; and military veterans and their families in North Carolina. The Department seeks to provide timely and responsive engagement to enhance NC's current military and veteran friendly environment. In addition, the Department also seeks to foster and promote business, technology, transportation, education, economic development, and healthcare for the above communities. Lastly, the Department works to accomplish these services by providing assistance and coordination between the Federal Government, the State of NC, its political subdivisions, and collaborative and supporting agencies.

## Let's Get Social!

Connect with us on social media for more news, updates, issue reports, action calls, and time sensitive items of note.



NC DMVA | [www.milvets.nc.gov](http://www.milvets.nc.gov)