#ICYMI

NCDMVA Deputy Secretary Martin Falls: *Lifetime of Service Celebrated*

Martin Falls’ career of service was celebrated at a retirement luncheon on Thursday, December 9th. The celebration was held at the National Guard Armory in Raleigh. Falls looks forward to time with family and friends.

*Thank you for your service, Colonel Falls, you will be missed.*
Korean War Soldier Returned to Durham 70 Years After He Went Missing

Army Cpl. Leon E. Clevenger went missing during combat against the North Korean People’s Army on July 11, 1950, when his unit was overrun near present-day Sejong City, South Korea.

The Durham native was laid to rest with full military honors on December 11th at the Oak Grove Memorial Gardens in Durham. North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Terry Westbrook, presented Cpl. Clevenger’s family with the “U.S. Army Corporal Leon E. Clevenger Day” proclamation, signed by Governor Roy Cooper.

Read More

2022 Wreaths Across America: Remember, Honor, Teach

On December 18th, welcomed Wreaths Across America organizers, volunteers, Boys and Girls Scouts of America, Color Guard, active-duty service members, and others to Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery for one of the more than 2,700 wreath-laying ceremonies being held nationwide and over 70 events hosted across North Carolina for Wreaths Across America Day.

N.C. Secretary of the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs, Walter Gaskin, delivered welcome remarks and presented the ‘Wreaths Across America Day’ Proclamation signed by Governor Cooper during the ceremony.

Successful Toys For Tots Campaign

Thanks to everyone who participated in a very successful 2021 Toys for Tots Campaign. NCDMVA staff and Dobbs Building personnel donated 75 toys to the campaign. We look forward to doing it again in 2022.
Pictured (from left) NCDMVA Director of Veteran Services, Terry Westbrook, Chair of the NC Utilities Commission, Charlotte Mitchell, and NCDMVA Secretary Walter Gaskin, Dec. 15, 2021.

Christmas Spirit at Black Mountain Veterans Home

Our State Veterans Home in Black Mountain received the First Place trophy in the Christmas Parade with their Polar Express themed float.

A member of the Clark Alexander Chapel UMC of Asheville drops off homemade prayer shawls, wheelchair totes and candy for Black Mountain residents.

Hickory Elks Lodge 1654 brought donations including snacks, warm pullovers, board games, and an Atomic Patriot Arcade Basketball set for the Black Mountain residents.
Alan Mainer, the Western NC Coordinator of Operation North State, (left), brings goodies to Black Mountain Veterans twice a year.

NCDMVA At Work

NCGWG: Social Determinants of Veteran Suicide Series Continues through January

In November, the NC Governor’s Working Group kicked off a five-part series on the Social Determinants of Veteran Suicide. This series runs through January 2022 and dives deep into one of the most critical issues facing Veterans today.

Watch Part 4 in the series on the “Resulting Instabilities” here and mark your calendar for Part 5, “Restoration of Self Worth” on January 27th.

Learn More

Public Service Announcements

Hidden Heroes Coffee
In 2021, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced its intent to launch the Suicide Prevention Grand Challenge (SPGC) in 2022. The SPGC is seeking bold, ground-breaking innovations across the broad problem space of Veteran suicide prevention to save lives and reduce Veteran suicide by at least 10 percent.

You are cordially invited to a virtual session, “Meeting of the Minds,” on Thursday, January 27, 2022, from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm Eastern. The purpose of the session is to elicit different perspectives and test assumptions to inform the direction of the VA SPGC. The discussion will be generalized and is meant to be a listening exercise, so it would not preclude interested attendees from participating in the future grand challenge activities.

Please RSVP here, or forward this invitation on to a relevant stakeholder or subject matter expert within your organization. The meeting link and other information will be shared via calendar invite to those who RSVP in just a few weeks.

Please place a hold on your calendar for now, and we hope that you will join us on January 27, 2022 from 11:00am – 3:00pm Eastern Time. This event is open to external innovators to help the VA solve the problem of Veteran suicide.
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.
NCDMVA welcomes Patrick Hoss

Going from two to three may not seem like much, but Communications Director, Jessica Coscia, says the help was needed.

The Communications Team partners closely with a variety of internal and external stakeholders—internally from the Secretary, all units, divisions and staff statewide—as well as external state and federal agencies and media organizations to amplify NCDMVA’s important contributions across a wide range of subjects.

Hoss’ background is in newspaper, magazine, and television news, but none of those outlets really let him be as creative as he can be here at the NCDMVA. “It also feels good knowing what you are doing is really having an effect on the people you are doing the work for,” he said.

Patrick supports with general communications duties, such as the daily news clips, the monthly newsletter, and media relations support. “It is a different job than any I have done before,” Hoss said, “but it is also a job I actually look forward to getting up and coming into the office for.”

We are glad to have Patrick on the team! Please join us in welcoming him to NCDMVA.
7 – National Invisible Pain Day
17 – Martin Luther King Day
23-29 - Snowcare for Troops Awareness Week
27 Vietnam War Cease Fire (1973)

February
2 – Groundhog Day
3 – Four Chaplain’s Day
4 – World Cancer Day
4 – National Wear Red Day
13 – Superbowl Sunday
14 – Valentine’s Day
17 – Random Acts of Kindness Day
21 – Presidents Day
19 - Coast Guard Reserve Birthday
28 - Desert Storm Veterans Day

Community Calendar
Jan 12: Hire Heroes USA Kickstart Your New Year Job Search
Jan 12: Mar 2 Cohen Clinic-Centerstone Parenting Workshop-Wednesdays
Jan 18: Hire Heroes USA Employer Spotlight: Amazon Careers in Program Management
Within Corporate Operations
Jan 19: Hire Heroes USA Federal Employment: Where to Begin
Jan 19: IVMF Beyond Traditional Therapy
Jan 19: Mar 9 Cohen Clinic - Centerstone Couples Workshop - Wednesdays
Jan 19: Mar 9 Cohen Clinic - Centerstone Couples Workshop - Wednesdays
Jan 27: Hidden Heroes Coffee
Jan 27: NCGWG Social Determinants of Veterans Suicide Webinar
Jan 19: Mar 9 Cohen Clinic - Centerstone Couples Workshop - Wednesdays

Click here for more events

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The North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NCDMVA) 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,
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