NCDMVA Wrap Up Successful African American Military & Veterans Lineage Project

As part of the African American Military and Veteran Lineage Project, each February, NCDMVA honors the African American military service members who came before us and still serve now, standing for their dreams and rights, and making a difference for us all.

To kick off Black History Month programming, the North Carolina Museum of History opened a temporary display entitled “We Wanted to Fight: Black North Carolinians in World War II” to commemorate the history of African American military service in North Carolina.

NCDMVA closed the month joining NMPMA, Inc. NC Triad-Triangle Chapter 38, and Tau Omega Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. at the North Carolina Museum of History to pay homage to the late, John Thompson, a veteran who made history as a Montford Point Marine during WWII who is featured in the museum’s display.

See the photo gallery.

“We Wanted to Fight” was designed as a traveling exhibit and NCDMVA will showcase the panels at various cultural institutions, schools, and military bases, across the state throughout the year with the
We are grateful to Gov. Roy Cooper for proclaiming February 20, 2022, as North Carolina African American Lineage Day recognizing the service and sacrifices these brave individuals made for our country and their impact on the generations that have followed them.

Thanks to North Carolina Museum of History, Elizabeth City State University School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the State Archives of North Carolina Military Collection for their partnership in making African American Military and Veterans Lineage Project a continued success.

(VIDEO) We Wanted to Fight: Preserving the Stories of NC’s African American Military Veterans

“All of our service members and veterans have a story to tell,” said North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Secretary Walter Gaskin. “Black Americans have always answered the call to serve, and this program during Black History Month is a fitting tribute to their stories, patriotism, and deep commitment to this country and to the great state of North Carolina.”

Watch the video.

Respecting the Sacrifices of our Veterans

Ceremonial Urn Cover Donated for Veteran Committal Services

Last week, North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall presented the donation of a ceremonial veteran urn cover to NCDMVA Secretary, Walter Gaskin, on behalf of the State of North Carolina during a ceremony at Western Carolina State Veteran Cemetery in Black Mountain. Click here to learn more.

A gallery of photos from the ceremonial urn presentation can be found here on the Department’s Flickr page.

View the news coverage on WLOS AVC 13 News.

Veterans at State Veterans Homes shared the love in February
Love was certainly in the air in February at the North Carolina State Veterans Homes in February.

Veterans at North Carolina State Veterans Home - Kinston shared some of their best Valentine's Day advice.

See more pictures [here](https://flic.kr/s/aH8qjzB27S).

**NCDMVA Salute African American Lineage Month Partners**

The North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs alongside the North Carolina Museum of History recognized and awarded the NC Department of State Archives Military Collection Archivist, Mathew M. Peek, and NC Museum of History Curator, Charlie Knight, with the Department's Challenge Coin, and signed letter of appreciation from NCDMVA Secretary Walter E. Gaskin. The framed awards recognize the hundreds of hours devoted to the African American Military and Veteran Lineage Project and many other projects alike.

From front left to right DNCR Secretary, Reid Wilson; NC Museum of History Curator, Charlie Knight; DMVA Secretary, Walter Gaskin; NC State Archives Military Archivist, Mathew Peek; DMVA Military Affairs Assistant Sec., Ariel Aponte; Dir NC History Museums, Ken Howard; Deputy Secretary Office of Archives and History, Dr. Darin Water.

Check out the photos here: [https://flic.kr/s/aH8qjzB27S](https://flic.kr/s/aH8qjzB27S).

**NCDMVA At Work**

NCDMVA Leadership attend NASDVA conference: Return with new ideas, best practices, and innovative programs to better
serve NC's Veterans

NCDMVA joined NASDVA members representing fifty states and six territories, came together from February 21-23 in Alexandria, VA to share best practices, be briefed by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officials, and coordinate efforts on tackling veterans’ issues across the United States.

NCDMVA Secretary Gaskin and Veterans Affairs leadership closed the month of February attending the Mid-Winter Conference of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs in Alexandria, Va. Although each state is unique with its own programs and resources, NASDVA is united by a common goal to make a difference in the lives of our veterans, their families and survivors. NCDMVA met with federal counterparts and other national veterans’ advocates, while exchanging best practices with other states tackling some of our most important issues. NASDVA is the second largest provider of services to veterans and North Carolina continues to lead in connecting veterans with earned services, benefits and support.

Learn more about the various benefits and services available to North Carolina’s veteransHERE

Secretary Gaskin, Les Beavers (KY) Legislative Director, Professor Brian VanDeMark, US Naval Academy and author of Road to Disaster

Public Service Announcements

Apply: NC Scholarship for Children of Wartime Veterans
More information

Extension of Gulf War Presumptive Period

To learn more about VA and Gulf War Veterans, click the button below.

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.

Connect with your benefits here:

Connect Now

You are not alone. Connect with Care Now.
As we kick off #WomensHistoryMonth we bring you the incredible story of Bennis Blue, of a pioneering female of the 82nd Airborne.

Read 1st Lt. Bennis Blue’s full story here.

Mr. Rick Long
Military Affairs Installation Coordinator

This month we profile NC DMVA’s Military Affairs Installation Coordinator, Mr. Rick Long.

Rick is a career veteran having served over 30 years in the military and when asked “what made you choose the military for a career,” his response was “I went in the military because I wanted to serve, thinking I would only do a 5-year enlistment,”.
He went on to explain how he didn’t plan on making a career out of it but, that he “loved serving, in various jobs and positions,” and that working with Service Members, gave him the desire to continue his service.

The retired Sergeant Major served as a combat veteran of Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom. He went on to graduate from Excelsior College with a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts (Summa Cum Laude), the USSOCOM Joint Special Operations University, Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy (Class 19), in addition to completing a Sergeant Major Course (Class J-19). His military education went on to include numerous courses, certifications, and accreditations.

Sergeant Major Rick Long was born in Gastonia, North Carolina, serving in the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Army Reserve. Currently as the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Military Installation Coordinator, Mr. Long organizes and supports the Department’s Installation Resiliency initiatives. In addition to his state service, he acts as a volunteer first responder and public safety diver for the Youngsville Underwater Search and Rescue Dive Team. He is married to his loving wife, Karen with 4 children Clay, Christian, Mackenzie, and Mia.

Thanks to Rick for his continued service here at NCDMVA.

Save the Date

March 3-5: Coast Guard Marathon

On Saturday, March 5th come to cheer NCDMVA Assistant Secretary of Military Affairs, Ariel Aponte, on as he participates in the first-ever Coast Guard Marathon in Elizabeth City.

For more details visit: https://coastguardmarathon.com/
March 8: Veterans Services of the Carolinas QPR for Suicide Prevention

NC.dmva is proud to partner with Veterans Services of the Carolinas and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as part of the NC Governor's Challenge to prevent suicide.

Please join us for QPR training at Ann Street United Methodist Church on March 8th. For more info or to register, visit abccm-vsc.org/qpr-registration. You can also request a training for your organization or community anywhere in the state of NC by visiting abccm-vsc.org/trainings!

Sign up here: https://www.facebook.com/events/48860160605705/?ref=newsfeed

March 17, 18, & 19: Cary, NC: Veterans Benefits Live VA in My Town

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Winston-Salem Regional Office is holding a Veterans Benefits Live, VA in My Town (former Veterans Experience Action Center (VEAC)) in Cary, North Carolina on March 17th and 18th from 9am until 3pm and March 19th from 9am until 2pm to provide face-to-face assistance with VA claims and information on VA operations. Representatives from Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) will be on hand to help veterans file claims, address questions for current claims, and learn more about VA benefits including Veteran Readiness & Employment, education, home loans, insurance, and burial benefits. Vet Center counselors will be onsite to assist with bereavement, military sexual trauma, substance abuse, and mental health screening. Veterans will be assisted in order of arrival during event.

For more information contact Richard Spysison at CaryVEAC@gmail.com
March 16: NC4ME Virtual Leadership Forum

Learn more at: https://www.facebook.com/events/505918967555636?ref=newsfeed

March 26: Etchings in Stone

On Saturday, Mar. 26 from 9–5 p.m. NC Museum of History will show the film "Etchings in Stone" in the Daniels Auditorium.
This film of a thought-provoking play by North Carolina Vietnam veteran Ron Harris places audience members “inside” the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall so individuals are privy to the words and unspoken thoughts of passing visitors.

Music, video clips, and photographs from the Vietnam era are featured. The film will be on a loop from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Learn more: https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/events/etchings-stone

April 1: One Carolina Military Hiring Expo

Hiring Our Heroes ensures all job seekers are prepared for the event by providing career development education, training, and resources.

For more information visit: https://events.hiringourheroes.org/event/5da79ddf-45e6-4bc8-ad2d-761b22c07859/summary

May 10 & 11: VA Women's heaRT Reengagement Training

It’s never too late to enroll in VA health care services. Sign up for the VA Women’s Health Reengagement Training (heaRT) to help you gain a better understanding of how VA can support your health care needs.

If you are a woman with military service experience and are not enrolled in VA health care, this program is for you. We are partnering with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office of Women’s Health (OWH) to bring the nation’s Veteran women unenrolled in VA services a training program to help you understand what VA health care services are available and how to access these services.

Through the VA Women’s Health Reengagement Training (heaRT), you will have the opportunity to connect with fellow Veteran women in your community and learn what
Veteran-and women-centered VA health care services are available to you:
- Preventive care and wellness
- Women's health services
- Whole health & mental health services
- How to determine VA care eligibility and enroll in VA

The virtual training will be a women-only, one-time, 4-hour session.

To register, visit https://bit.ly/womensheart_NC.

If you do not have access to internet or a smartphone, please call (971) 394-3270 to register. You are welcome to register for any session, but we recommend attending one hosted in your state to learn about customized resources local to you.

Please contact info@WomensheaRT.info with any questions.

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Community Calendar

**Click here** for an up-to-date listing of military and veterans-focused events across North Carolina this month.

- Mar 5  CLT Afghan Task Force, Charlotte
- Mar 5  Charlotte Football Clubs inaugural game - Active Guard Reserve only
- Mar 7-18  Entrepreneur Boot Camp for Veterans
- Mar 8  Cycling Heals Vets Connect Event, Salem Lake
- Mar 8  Veteran Pro Bono Service Day
- Mar 8  Careers in Cybersecurity
- Mar 9  Mastering LinkedIn
- Mar 9  Luncheon with The Falling and the Rising, Charlotte
- Mar 12  Dale Beatty Memorial 5K, Cornelius
- Mar 13  K9 Veterans Day
- Mar 14-18  Patriots Path Workshop
- Mar 15  American Legion Birthday
- Mar 15  National Virtual Career Fair for Veterans
- Mar 15  USO Career Kickstart featuring Pratt & Whitney
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 North Carolina’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