



VETERANS AFFAIRS



A Year of Gratitude and Service

Dear Veterans, Families, and Members of Our Community,

As we celebrate Independence Day, we pause to reflect on the freedoms we enjoy and the generations of service members who made them possible. July 4th is more than fireworks and parades—it's a reminder of the courage and sacrifice of our Veterans and their families. We thank you not only for your service, but for continuing to inspire us each day. As you celebrate, we also encourage mindfulness around fireworks, which can be difficult for those living with the invisible wounds of war.

Later this month, on July 27, we observe Korean War Veterans Armistice Day—a time to honor the 5.8 million Americans who served during a conflict too often called “The Forgotten War.” These Veterans faced brutal winters, unforgiving terrain, and intense combat. More than 36,000 gave their lives, and many others returned home carrying the physical and emotional scars of war. We remember their sacrifices and reaffirm our enduring gratitude.

As we reflect on the past year, we want to express our heartfelt appreciation to each of you. June 24 marked one year since Amelia, our Administrative Assistant, and I stepped into these roles—and what a meaningful and humbling year it has been. We are truly grateful for the warm welcome, the trust you've placed in us, and the relationships we've built with so many of you.

Over the last 12 months, we've conducted over 250 compensation and pension appointments, 67 Disabled Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption applications, dozens of general benefit consultations, 7 Higher-Level Reviews, and several appeals. We processed 120 burial benefit applications, welcomed 115 new clients and also engaged in numerous community speaking opportunities and outreach events. Every appointment, every conversation, and every handshake has reminded us of the honor it is to serve this remarkable community.

This year also brought new initiatives to life—our Facebook page, monthly newsletter, the Battle Brew coffee group, Operation Green Light, our Holiday Open House, and the upcoming Veterans Expo and Stand Down in November. These efforts have helped us connect more deeply and provide meaningful support to Veterans and families throughout our region.

To every Veteran and loved one we've had the privilege to serve: thank you. Thank you for your service, your stories, and your continued presence in our lives. It is our honor to walk alongside you, and we look forward to the year ahead with gratitude and purpose.

Jessica
Jessica Walker
Director

Highlights

Parsonage
Car Show

OVN
Ride & Roast

Homeless
Veterans Ride

CPR Saves
Lives

Extreme Heat

PA Veterans
Homes

Park Passes



The Veteran's Parsonage
ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE
VETERANS HOMELESS SHELTER

Sunday, July 13, 2025
2:00 pm -6:00 pm
Freedom Church
905 McKnight Road, Indiana PA

Car Show!




- Food Trucks
- Live Music
- 50/50 Drawing
- Kids Bouncy House
- Serving God by helping Veterans

2ND ANNUAL HOMELESS VETERANS RIDE
SPONSORED BY: B.A.C.K. COALHOUNDS
July 27, 2025

Registration: 10am Just joining
Rider: \$20 Passenger \$10 for food: \$10

ALL STREET LEGAL VEHICLES WELCOMED
Starting Location: TBD
End Location: Blairsville VFW
Kick Stands Up at 12pm





**VETERANS EXPO
AND
STAND DOWN**

SAVE THE DATE
NOVEMBER 7-8, 2025
9:00-4:00 PM @ KCAC
INDIANA, PA

Interested in being a Sponsor, Vendor, or Volunteer?
Scan or Click QR Code



Financial support provided by a VTF grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs



**11th Annual
HCNR
HOG ROAST
& RIDE
FOR VETERANS**

Motorcycle Ride departs Homer City
Nazarene Church at 10:30am

We ride in honor of our heroes KIA in Vietnam from Indiana Co.

VETERANS OUTREACH AREA

Outreach area open 9:30-12:30
Lunch open to the public -\$15
Learn more about help available for Veterans!


JULY 12
**LUNCH SERVED
AT 12:30**

3513 Rte 119 Hwy S,
Homer City, PA



Proceeds from the event support OVN events to honor fallen heroes, Gold Star events, outreach events for Veterans, and Veterans sports & music programs focused on mental Health and wellness.

Veteran Spotlight



Mr. Jack Hazelet, born in 1930 and originally from the Pioneer Lake area of Pennsylvania, was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1952. Trained as an Infantryman, Jack was deployed to Korea in support of the war. After completing his military service, he returned home and became a hardworking member of the community. Jack held a variety of jobs over the years—from working at the sawmill in Moss Creek, to owning the old Harry's Pizza in town, to helping with cattle on the family's dairy farm. He is the proud father of three children: Debbie, Dave, and Vickie. Woodworking was one of Jack's great passions, and he crafted many beautiful pieces over the years. Now in his 90s, Jack currently lives independently in Indiana and enjoys spending time working on one of his many jigsaw puzzles with Debbie or attending Battle Brew with fellow local Veterans.

VA News and Information



CPR Saves Lives

Each year, over 300,000 Veterans suffer cardiac arrest—most often at home—with only 20% surviving. Immediate CPR can double or triple a Veteran's chances of survival by manually pumping the heart to keep blood and oxygen flowing until help arrives. An automated external defibrillator (AED) can restart a stopped heart when used quickly. VA offers hands-on CPR and AED training at nearly every medical center nationwide, taking less than a day to complete. This training helps caregivers respond confidently in emergencies, reducing panic and uncertainty. To enroll, call the Caregiver Support Line toll-free at 1-855-260-3274 or visit [Resources for Caregivers](#). Learn life-saving skills and be ready to help a Veteran when they need it most. [Read More](#)



Share Your Story

The Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) now offers "VLM for Living Veterans," a free online tool allowing Veterans to securely share their life stories, photos, military achievements, and important documents while still alive.

To use this feature, Veterans must sign up and be approved for pre-need eligibility—a process that determines burial eligibility in a VA national cemetery ahead of time. Personal content stays private until after the Veteran passes and burial benefits are approved, then it's published on their VLM page.

Since its 2019 launch, VLM honors nearly 10 million Veterans and helps families preserve their loved ones' legacies in their own words. Learn more and apply at the [VLM website](#). [Read More](#)



Health Care for Women

On June 12, 1948, President Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, granting women the right to serve as permanent members of the Armed Forces. Today, more than 2 million women Veterans—the fastest-growing Veteran group—live across the U.S. The VA is dedicated to meeting their needs by expanding access and investing in specialized care. Every VA medical center has trained women's health providers offering services like birth control, maternity care, breast cancer screening, mental health support, and more. Need help navigating your options? Call or text the Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-VA-WOMEN. It's free, confidential, and here to support you. [Read More](#)



Stay Safe During Extreme Heat

Extreme heat—defined as temperatures over 90°F for two or more days—can cause serious health problems, including heat stroke and even death. To stay safe, avoid outdoor activities between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., wear light, loose-fitting clothing, apply SPF 30+ sunscreen, and drink plenty of water. Never leave children or pets in vehicles, and check on vulnerable individuals. If your home is too hot, visit a cooling center, mall, library, or friend's home. Know the signs of heat illness—cramps, dizziness, heavy sweating—and take immediate action if symptoms occur. Prepare for possible power outages and have a plan if you rely on medical devices or refrigerated medication. Stay informed with alerts from [weather.gov](#) or FEMA apps, and visit [heat.gov](#) for resources and local cooling center information. Update your personal Heat Action Plan and help spread awareness to others at higher risk. Together, we can prevent heat-related emergencies and protect our communities. [Read More](#)



Women Veterans Deserve Respect

Harassment has no place at VA. Yet a recent study shows some women Veterans have experienced harassment on VA grounds—a serious issue that can retraumatize survivors of military sexual trauma and cause some to avoid needed care. Harassment includes inappropriate comments, staring, intrusive questions, or being touched or followed. VA is taking action through a zero-tolerance policy, staff training, public education, and support systems. Veterans can report incidents to VA Police, patient advocates, Women Veterans Program Managers, health care staff, or by calling 855-829-6636. Reports—anonymous or named—are taken seriously, investigated within one business day, and followed up with appropriate action and support. Everyone at VA—staff, Veterans, and visitors—can help by learning how to safely intervene and, most importantly, by reporting harassment. Together, we can build a culture of respect where all Veterans feel safe. [Read More](#)

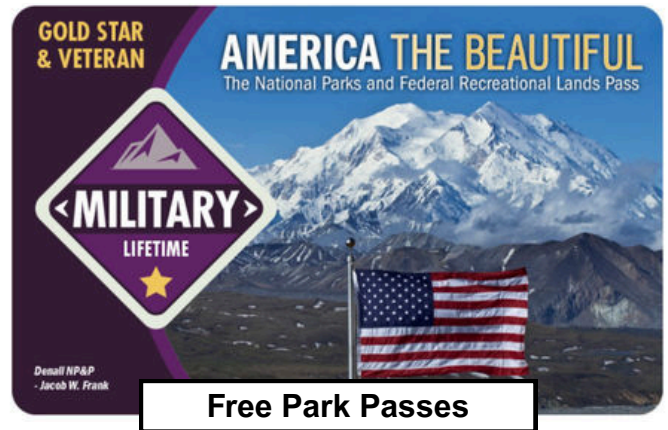
Resources



Pennsylvania proudly operates six Veterans Homes across the Commonwealth, offering high-quality, long-term care to eligible Veterans and their spouses. These homes provide personal care, skilled nursing, memory support, and a strong sense of community that honors the service and sacrifice of those who served. From Erie to Philadelphia, each home is committed to supporting the physical, emotional, and social well-being of its residents. With a focus on dignity and respect, Pennsylvania Veterans Homes are more than care facilities—they are communities built on camaraderie and service.

To see what makes these homes special, watch the [GTKU - Veterans Homes Overview](#) on YouTube.

For more details on eligibility, locations, and services, visit the [PA Veterans Homes website](#), or call our office at 724-465-3815—we're here to help Veterans and their family members learn more.



U.S. military members, Veterans, and Gold Star Families are eligible for free annual or lifetime passes to over 2,000 federal recreation sites across the country. This includes national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, grasslands, and lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These passes cover entrance and standard amenity (day-use) fees and serve as a token of appreciation for military service and sacrifice. The new lifetime pass for veterans and Gold Star Families is in addition to the free annual Military Pass available to current U.S. military members and their dependents. Each lifetime pass covers entrance fees for the driver and all passengers in a personal vehicle, or the passholder and up to three adults at per-person sites. Veterans must present accepted ID. Gold Star Families can self-certify and download a voucher.

To learn more or apply, visit: www.nps.gov.



IUP's Military and Veterans Resource Center (MVRC) supports student Veterans and military-affiliated students as they transition from military service to college life. The MVRC assists with navigating IUP, using VA education benefits, and provides resources for academic and personal success.

It also promotes awareness of Veteran issues and fosters a strong sense of community and support for Veterans, military-affiliated students, and their families.

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Thank you for reading!

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