



# DMVA

North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

## ON POINT NEWSLETTER

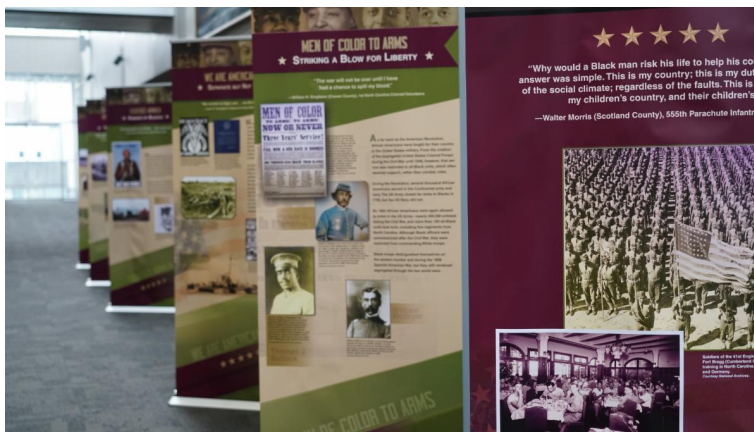
## March 2022 Newsletter

### In This Issue

- ICYMI: In Case You Missed It
- At Work
- PSAs
- Leaderboard
- Save the Date
- Community Calendar

### #ICYMI

#### 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

goal of reaching a broad audience across the state. [Stay tuned for details!](#)

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](#)

## 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/aHBqjzB27S>

---

## 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.

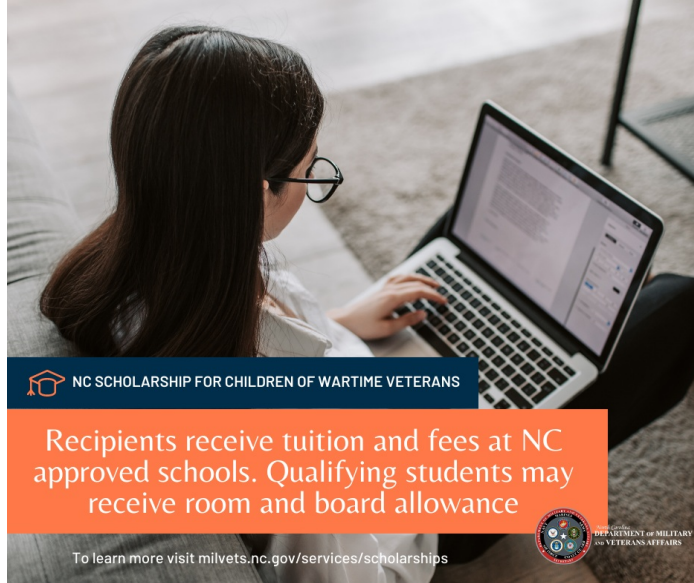
Learn more about the various benefits and services available to North Carolina's veterans [HERE](#)


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**



 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](https://milvets.nc.gov/services/scholarships)



[More information](#)

## Extention of Gulf War Presumptive Period



**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 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.**



## 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.



[More information](#)

## Leaderboard

### Women's History Month: Bennis M. Blue - Pioneering Female Officer of the 82nd Airborne Division

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](#).



AFRICAN AMERICAN MILITARY &  
VETERANS LINEAGE PROJECT

**BENNIS M. BLUE**

PIONEERING FEMALE OFFICER OF THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION

### 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/>

# READY. SET. RACE!

## COAST GUARD MARATHON, HALF MARATHON & 5K

### MARCH 3-5, 2022 IN ELIZABETH CITY, NC

Until now, the United States Coast Guard was the only branch of the U.S. military without an official road race. Visit **Elizabeth City** is excited to host the first in-person **Coast Guard Marathon** after a successful virtual race in 2021.

#### Save 10%!

All active and retired uniformed services use code **CGM2022** when registering.

**FULL | HALF | 5K**



To learn more about the race, visit **CoastGuardMarathon.com** or scan this QR code



Presenting Sponsor



**CoastGuardMarathon.com**

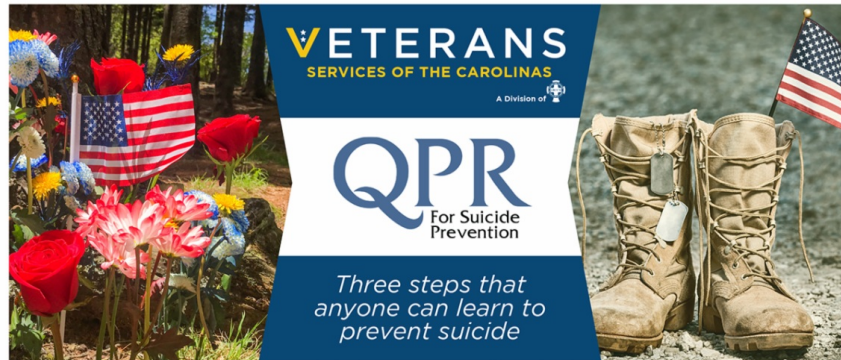


# March 8: Veterans Services of the Carolinas QPR for Suicide Prevention

[NC.dmya](#) 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](http://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!](http://abccm-vsc.org/trainings!)

Sign up here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/488601606005705/?ref=newsfeed>



## Trainers



**Jenn Melton**  
Care Coordinator  
Veterans Services  
of the Carolinas



**Benji Horton**  
Peer Support Specialist  
Veterans Services  
of the Carolinas



Register now using  
the QR code or online



[abccm-vsc.org/qpr-registration](http://abccm-vsc.org/qpr-registration)

## Training Will Cover

- How to Question, Persuade, and Refer someone who may be suicidal
- How to get help for yourself or learn more about preventing suicide
- The common causes of suicidal behavior
- The warning signs of suicide
- How to get help for someone in crisis

**For more information call 855-962-8387**

\*This training is a part of the NC Governor's Challenge to prevent suicide.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



North Carolina  
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY  
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS



## 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](mailto:CaryVEAC@gmail.com)

**VETERANS BENEFITS LIVE  
VA IN MY TOWN  
CARY, NORTH CAROLINA.**  
FORMERLY THE VEAC

**YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS THIS EVENT**  
Should any of the following apply :

You would like to file a new claim with the VA.  
You have questions about VA appeals or benefits to which you may be entitled.  
You have questions about VA Healthcare.

Veterans and dependents will be assisted by a combined team including Veterans' Benefits and Health Administrators, Vet Center, and Veterans' Service Officers.

They will assist with the following:  
Face-to-face explanation and assistance facilitating and expediting existing claims and appeals, filing new claims, and accepting all claims-related evidence for processing and providing information regarding benefit related VA programs.

**Who:** All veterans and family members of veterans

**Where:** Herbert Young Community Center, 101 Wilkinson Avenue, Cary, North Carolina 27513

**When:** 17th, 18th, 19th of March 2022.  
Hours on Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please bring with you the proper documentation about your case: DD 214, all medical records about your disability both military and civilian, and dependency documents if new or not already provided to the VA.

Wait times may be long, please be patient.  
Coffee, water, and snacks provided free of charge.

For more information contact Richard Spyrison at [CaryVEAC@gmail.com](mailto: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>

A promotional poster for the One Carolina Military Hiring Expo. The top left features a photograph of a smiling military family: a woman in a camouflage uniform, a man in a camouflage uniform, and a young girl. The right side of the poster has a grey background with three stars above the text "ONE CAROLINA MILITARY HIRING EXPO". Below this, it says "PRESENTED BY LOWE'S &amp; THE CAROLINA PANTHERS" and "04.01.2022 | BANK OF AMERICA STADIUM | 11AM - 4PM". A small note states "ALL NCME EVENTS ARE FREE &amp; OPEN TO ALL VETERANS, TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS, GUARD/RESERVE &amp; MILITARY SPOUSES." At the bottom, there are logos for "HIRING OUR HEROES" (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation), "NC4ME" (North Carolina Chamber of Military Executives), "Lowe's MILITARY", and "VETERANS BRIDGE HOME".

## 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](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](mailto:info@WomensheaRT.info) with any questions.



Did You Know?  
*If you have TRICARE and/or private insurance, you could still be eligible for VA services.*

## VA WOMEN'S HEALTH REENGAGEMENT TRAINING

Connect with women Veterans in your community and learn what Veteran- and women-centered VA health care services are available to you:

- Women's health services
- Whole health & mental health services
- How to determine VA care eligibility and enroll in VA

To register, visit  
[calendly.com/WomensheaRT](https://calendly.com/WomensheaRT)

If you do not have access to internet or smartphone, call (971) 394-3270 to register.  
Contact [info@WomensheaRT.info](mailto:info@WomensheaRT.info) with questions.

 Women Veterans Health Reengagement Training  
heaRT 

## 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](#)



- Mar 16 [Education Kickstart with the USO](#)
- Mar 16 [Patriots Path Speed Networking](#)
- Mar 17-19 [Veterans Benefits File New Claims, Cary](#)
- Mar 21 [Rosie The Riveter Day](#)
- Mar 24 [NC Governors Working Group, Raleigh](#)
- Mar 24 [Salute to Women Veterans, High Point](#)
- Mar 24 [Female Veterans Table Talk](#)
- Mar 25 [Medal of Honor Day](#)
- Mar 26 [NC Women Veterans Meet & Greet, Raleigh](#)
- Mar 29 [National Vietnam War Veterans Day](#)
- Mar 29 [VIETNAM VETERANS DAY Lunch, Salisbury](#)
- Mar 30 [Veterans Appreciation Drive Thru Breakfast, Greensboro](#)
- Mar 31 - Apr 4 [My Time to Heal Retreat \(Gold Star Wives only\), Hickory](#)
- Mar 31 [Janene McGee Champion for Change Award scholarship application due](#)
- Mar 31 [Veterans Appreciation Drive Thru, Burlington](#)
- Mar 31 [PMFF Scholarship deadline](#)

## Want to be included in a future issue?

To recommend content, news, and resources for future issues or find more information, please connect with us at [publisher@milvets.nc.gov](mailto:publisher@milvets.nc.gov). You can view previous issues [here](#).

Share your news



North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

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.

