



# 2025 SPRING NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (N.E.C.) REPORTS



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# 2025 Spring National Executive Committee (N.E.C.) Reports

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# AMVETS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) MEETING

*Saturday, March 15, 2025*

Call Meeting To Order.....	National Commander Horace Johnson
Invocation.....	National Chaplain Rigley K. Jackson
Honors To The Colors.....	National Provost Marshal Arthur Majors
Roll Call.....	National Executive Director Joe Chenelly
Adoption Of Agenda.....	National Commander Johnson
Approval Of Minutes.....	National Commander Johnson
<b>NEC Reports</b>	
District I.....	Commander Tom Davitt
District II.....	Commander Randy Ferguson
District III.....	Commander Earl Hood
District IV.....	Commander Sheldon Hartfield
District V.....	Commander Deborah Wehrli
District VI.....	Commander Jack Isaacson
<b>Committee Reports</b>	
Finance.....	National Finance Officer Kelly McFarlain
VAVS.....	VAVS Chairman Bobby Lumpkins
National Staff Reports.....	Executive Director Chenelly
National Service Foundation.....	NSF President Harold Chapman
	NSF Executive Director Joe Chenelly
	NSF Finance Director Agha Husain
Old Business.....	National Commander Johnson
New Business.....	National Commander Johnson
Benediction.....	National Chaplain Rigley K. Jackson
Honors To Colors.....	National Provost Marshal Arthur Majors



# National District I

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*Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island reports not received by deadline*



# Report of Thomas M. Davitt, National District I Commander

# National District I

## Membership

All Departments have been working on membership renewals and increasing their membership as they identified more members that did not renew last year. With the ability to renew members between one year and two years this has been helpful in establishing strong numbers in membership. Life Membership is being processed with in each Department. The most important part of Life Membership is with the three categories of Life Membership, this has allowed us to easily promote same. All Departments have printed off membership roster for each local post so they can management their membership.

## Upcoming Events

Our last National District One Meeting was conducted on Zoom, January 11 and 12, 2025. A membership roundtable meeting was conducted on Saturday January 11, 2025. The next National District One Meeting is scheduled for April 4th, 5th, and 6th, 2025 to be held at AMVETS Post 1980 Marlboro, MA. Hotel information will be available. Attended the AMVETS Post #7 in RI with Dana Dillon, Past National District One Commander and Al Duff, Adjutant for National District One and myself in an effort to provide direction for reorganization. We have attend our first meeting on February 13, 2025 at 6:00pm and then a follow-up meeting on Sunday March 2, 2025.

## Programs

Departments have been busy with the Americanism Program which has been introduced in the local elementary-middle school, as well as high schools. Departments have been identifying students eligible for the Founding Forward program participation for students to attend at Valley Forge, PA. Several Departments have been holding White Clover Fund Raising efforts in support of the community of veterans and families. The Department of Massachusetts held their annual Passion Plunge on Saturday February 8, 2025 and raised over \$27,000.00 for Special Olympics of Massachusetts. Three major News Networks and Television Stations covered this event. The Department of Maine also supported a Polar Plunge event on February 15, 2025. Vermont has been busy with

membership drives and scouting programs within their state.

## Legislative

Departments have continued to support their state Governor's Council with representation at hearings concerning veterans and veterans' family legislation. Housing issues and health care have been issues that have been a continued effort in supporting our veterans communities. Homelessness is always being reviewed with some progress involving some temporary and permanent shelters being eastablished.

## Service

Departments have been busy with local veteran programs since Veterans' Day/ Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremonies and the Eternal Flame Ceremonies at our National and local cemeteries.

## Other

We have lost Michelle Mickey Britton, Past Department Ladies Auxiliary President and a great advocate for veterans and their families. She was very instrumental in fundraising efforts in Massachusetts. She was a great support of AMVETS National District One over the years . She will be missed by all. Also Fred Vineyard, Department Commander for New Jersey suffered the loss of his sister. She will also be missed. Rest in Peace.



# Report of James E. Laflin, NEC Department of Maine

## National District I

### Membership

The department of Maine continues to push all posts to get all of their annual members renewed. We are at about 75% renewals.

### Upcoming Events

The next Dist. One meeting is scheduled for 11-13 April, 25 in Marlboro, Ma. The National NEC meeting is scheduled for 14-16 Mar.in Washington, PA. The Dept of Me. state convention is scheduled for May 30-1 June,2025 at the Best Western Merry Manor Inn, 700 Main St., South Portland, ME 04106, Tel. 207-774-6151.

### Programs

The Dept. of Maine continues to get all posts working on reporting programs using the old system which is working much better.

### Legislative

We constantly are checking on any new Veterans bill that come up concerning Veterans. Especially in our state legislature.

### Service

The Dept. of ME continues to work with the Maine Veterans Coordinating Committee to help fight for all veterans in the state. We also work closely with the ME. Dept. of Veterans Services and our VA Hospital to help Veterans.

### Other

This is my report and I move for its adoption at the proper time.



# Report of PDC Caroline J. Kenyon, NEC Department of Massachusetts

## National District I

### Membership

We're still receiving membership renewals slowly for annual members. But they're coming in. I've asked our 1st Vice Commander for a percentage report he gets on our annual members. I'm still waiting for the report. If he's unable to forward the information to me. I'll check with the gentleman who go to state house for help. Right now it's a work in progress.

### Upcoming Events

Because the Spring NEC being today. Our normal SEC an always held on the 3rd Sunday of the odd months. So that would have been tomorrow. In our January SEC meeting a motion on the floor to have our SEC date be changed. The motion was passed. Now our March SEC will be on Sunday, March 30th. The meeting will start at the same time, but this is picture day for our State Convention Book. We have everyone arrive early to have pictures taken.

National District 1 - Our next location will be in Massachusetts. The dates are as followed - April 4th through April 6th. The location for National District 1 is Post 1980, Marlborough. Everything will be at the post. Starting on Friday, April 4th, is a get together. On Saturday, April 5th, is the round table starting at 2 PM. Later that evening will be a dinner. The cost of the dinner hasn't been determined yet. On Sunday, April 6th, is the actual meeting at 9 AM. It will be your responsibility to make a hotel room reservation in the area surrounding the post. Ask if they offer "Late Check Out" when you make your reservation. If they do offer it, please take advantage of their offer. We would need a head count if you're planning to attend the dinner. Please let the post know at lease one week prior to the weekend of.

National District 1. Joint Testimony - we're having a Joint Testimony on April 25th, at Post 79, Natick. A committee was formed, but things aren't finalized yet. Ex: Meal to be picked and ticket prices.

Memorial Day Service - On May 25th, We have our Annual Memorial Day Ceremony held at the National Veterans Cemetery in Bourne. The very next day, May

26th, which is Memorial Day. Several members of AMVETS family will be attending firing squads and parades in their hometowns.

Convention - Our State Convention will be at Post 79, Natick. The dates are June 13th through June 15th. On Friday night, June 13th, will be a get together down stairs in the bar. Remember to wear your red shirt that day for red shirt friday. On Saturday morning, June 14th (Flag Day), We'll start with our Joint Opening Ceremony. Then proceed to our normal business of the convention. That evening will be a Commander's Dinner. That isn't finalized yet. On Sunday morning, June 15th, if needed. We'll have an election and process to complete convention business. Then we'll swear in all the newly elected officials for 2025 - 2026.

We did mail a letter to National. This is to invite our National Commander, Horace Johnson, to attend our state convention. I'm mailing it to the New National Headquarters address in Washington, PA. If for some reason, the National Commander is unable to attend please designate someone from the National level to represent him. In regards to hotels, it will be your responsibility to make a room reservation. There are several hotels in the area not far from the post. If they offer a late check out. It's your option to take it. You might have time between new officers being sworn in.

### Programs

Americanism - Our committee is still on going. We'll have our final judging in April. The winners will be forwarded to National to complete on the National level. Polar Bear Passion Plunge - Our Polar Bear Passion Plunge for Special Olympics held its 22nd Annual Plunge on February 8th. The location was once again, Post 79, Natick. The day prior to the plunge, our team of ice breakers completed the task of breaking the 12 inch thick ice. It took them 5 hours with help from a backhoe to complete the task. The very next day it frozen over but not as bad. So they had to break the ice again. We had a total of 96 participants take the plunge. For the total amount raised was \$23,364. This year we didn't make our pledge goal. At this time, we can still collect donations until the end of April. We did





## Report of PDC Caroline J. Kenyon, NEC Department of Massachusetts (*continued*)

## National District I

receive an email from the staff thanking us and they can't wait for next year's plunge. We did give a challenge to Stephanie the head organizer for Special Olympics in Massachusetts to plunge in with us. She doesn't remember saying that but she did accept the challenge and she did plunge in with us.

Scholarship- Is still pending at the moment. I will keep you updated.

### **Legislative**

Right now, we have nothing that I'm aware of pertaining to bills for veterans going to the governor's desk for signature. So it's one in progress for now.

### **Service**

The last few months, we had AMVETS and Ladies Auxiliary members pass away. The first one was a Pass Department Commander, James Wiley. The second one that passed away was Pass Department President, Michelle "Mickey" Britton-Robotham, everyone from National District 1 knew her. She will truly be missed.

### **Other**

Commander's Christmas Party - This was held on December 15th, at Post 74, Three Rivers. He had approximately 60 people. Which were family, friends and colleagues attend. Everyone had to bring an unwrapped toy to the party. Everyone enjoyed themselves and the food was outstanding. This is where all of his officers presented him with his State Commander's Jacket. He does look good in his jacket. All the toys were given went to the local police for their toy drive. Honor Guard - Our State Honor Guard got informed to present colors for a Boston Celtic's home game. As if this, the date is still pending. It's one in progress.





# National District II

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*West Virginia report not received by deadline*



# Report of Randy Ferguson, National District II Commander

## National District II

### Membership

All Departments are working on retaining all current members and working to recruit new members.

### Upcoming Events

Commander Harry Brower and the Department of NC has graciously offer to host the National District II Meeting. It will be April 4, 5, & 6 in Hickory NC. All National officers are cordially invited to attend.

### Programs

All of District II Departments are sending in there program reports.

### Legislative

The different Departments will report on there states.

### Service

All departments have resounded to the current issues that are in Western NC, Northern Georgia and Eastern Tennessee. Thank You

### Other

Looking forward to seeing everyone at National Convention this year in Greensboro NC. Be ready to handle AMVETS business and to have an AMVETS good time.



# Report of David Haines, NEC Department of Delaware

## National District II

National Commander, District II Commander, Department Commanders and fellow AMVETS.

### Membership

Renewal is about 83%

### Programs

5 posts have reported for the period. 3 posts in the Department are involved in legislative efforts in Dover and Delaware ROTC programs across the State. Food drives are a regular part of our programs. The Department has kicked off the ROTC Scholarship program for the year 2025.

**Post #2:** Participates in Scholarship's and ROTC Scholarships, along with major donations to the men's "Home of the Brave for Veterans" and the new "Women Home of the BRAVE" for women Veterans" in Milford Delaware and Milford's Veterans Home. Post 2 participated in Wreaths across America. Post 2 has the 2nd Largest Ladies Aux post in the country members Just over 625. Post 2 is recruiting members to join in Legislative efforts in Dover to add a cabinet level position for Veteran's affairs.

**Post #5:** The Post has assisted Post # 2 at its various functions and is picking up momentum,

**Post #1694:** They are doing numerous fund raisers and are planning a "White Clover drive at various business locations in Seaford Delaware.

**Post #22:** Membership reports little change. Social quarter activity continues to be robust and has resumed kitchen operations daily.

**Post #8323:** The Post Is active in community, and has had several fund-raising drives including assisting of building ramps for Veterans

### Service

The Department also participated in legislative proposals which consisted of over \$110,000.00 going to the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund to help assist Veterans and their Spouses. These funds come from our Video

lottery machines. The Department also assisted several Vets through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

### Legislative Issues

The Department and posts are active in legislation both at the State and National level. We coordinate with the VFW and American Legion, on various pieces of legislation with both state and federal elected officials. Department maintains close relationship with key legislative leaders and their staff.

### Upcoming Events

Trip to Washington DC to Vietnam Wall April 2025

Commander, this concludes my report and I move for adoption.

Respectfully submitted,

David Haines

NEC

AMVETS Department of Delaware



# Report of Aaron J. Smith, NEC Department of District of Columbia

## National District II

National Commander, National Officers, Members of the National Executive Committee, and Fellow AMVETS.

I bring you greetings from the members of the Department of the District of Columbia.

### Membership

The Commander and Second Vice Commander are doing an excellent job working on our membership renewals. Our new members' totals are above last year at this time.

### Programs

Department members continue to provide funds each month to the District of Columbia (DC) Veteran Administration Medical Center (DCVAMC), Volunteer Service Office which is designated to support the following three specific areas: Comfort kits, Voluntary Services Discretionary Fund and Dental Fund. Each month Johnnie Collins Jr. AMVETS Post #0008 donates funds to sponsor bingo for veterans residing at the DCVAMC Community Living Center (CLC). During this reporting period I am happy to report that this Department achieved 100% participation for all posts.

### Service

In December 2024, the Department sponsored a Holiday party for the seniors at the District of Columbia "Greenleaf Senior Center". This is an annual program which the seniors appreciate.

The Department hosted a luncheon for AMVETS National Commander Horace Johnson at Patton Hall Officers Club in Fort Myer, Virginia. In November, the Department donated winter coats to support the DCVAMC Annual Winter Haven program. Post 0008 volunteered to help distribute winter coats, hats, gloves, boots and comfort kits to homeless veterans and their families at this event.

### Upcoming Events

The District of Columbia will hold its Spring DEC on March 22, 2025, and the Department Convention on June 21, 2025, both at Spates Hall, Joint Myer-Henderson Hall, Ft Myer, Virginia.

National Commander, this concludes my report, and I move for its adoption.



# Report of Andre R. Martel, NEC Department of Maryland

## National District II

### Membership

Membership activity continues at a steady pace and we continue to be hopeful that we will reach 100% by Convention time.

Baltimore and Martinsburg and at several other centers including the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home and at other nursing homes across the State.

### Upcoming Events

Our next DEC will be in early April with our Department Convention scheduled for June 7th in Thurmont, MD. We are proud to announce that this year's selected recipient of the PNC A. Leo Anderson Freestate Award of Excellence is Mr. Jonathan Eckman, Director of the Maryland VA Health Care System (MVAHCS). Award presentation will be on April 26th at the Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City, MD. Since 2020, Mr. Eckman has led the MVAHCS in assisting and improving veterans health care, including through the pandemic and periods of reorganizations. Governors, legislators, volunteers, Veterans assistants, and others have been past recipients. Congratulations, Mr. Eckman.

### Programs

We are proud to report that we reached 100% reporting for the last reporting period and we are confident we will be able to achieve that goal again by the end of this reporting period. All of our Posts have remained active and continue to contribute to the welfare of Maryland veterans.

### Legislative

Our legislative session began in January 2025 and will continue through April 2025. We expect several pro-veteran bills to be introduced and are working independently and through the Joint Veterans Committee (JVC) of Maryland to positively influence those actions. Led by AMVET members Deborah Rey and Karla Lathroum, the JVC held its 2d Annual "Operation Annapolis" on February 4th, leading veterans from multiple VSOs to the State Capitol to meet their legislators and advocate for veterans issues currently being considered.

### Service

VA centers and hospitals continue to open up to volunteer activities and Maryland is taking advantage. More activities have taken place at VA Hospitals in



# Report of David Wilburn, NEC Department of North Carolina

## National District II

### Membership

Membership is very tough for this department. We are holding our own for now. I really hope that we can get more membership and be able to maintain our membership. It's difficult for new people to get involved. Hope that this trend will stop. Our Department does membership drives and we do recurring events.

### Upcoming Events

National District 2 meeting will be held in Hickory, North Carolina. April 4,5 and 6 2025. DEC is the same time. National Convention will be in Greensboro, North Carolina this year.

### Programs

Our Department holds annual golf tournaments throughout the year. Car shows and craft shows are some other programs that we participate in. We have festivals and other events to raise money and get new members. Each Memorial Day and Veterans Day we place flags on the graves of veterans. Our Department has Riders who plan and execute their bike rides.

### Legislative

The Department of North Carolina Veterans Council meetings are held in Raleigh, North Carolina every month. We try to attend the meetings. I know that sometimes we don't attend because the location is not available for most people. I am not aware of any new information at this time.

### Service

The Department of North Carolina has a few Posts that have Honor Guards. They are participating in missions as they come in. They are very active with their missions. At this time we do not have a lot of members involved with visiting the VA hospitals.



# Report of Robert Bankhead, NEC Department of Pennsylvania

## National District II

### Membership

We continue to try innovative ways to increase membership. with the Headquarters relocating to PA we are anticipating this will help us increase our membership .

### Upcoming Events

The Department Convention will be June 19-22 in Williamsport Pa contact Dept Headquarters for details 717 865 9982

### Programs

42 Letters for ROTB/JROTC were sent to known participating programs. We continue to be able to have 100% of our post report programs That were performed thanks to our hard charging and dedicated 2nd Vice Commander. Bill Zelner

### Legislative

Our Legislative Director continues to distribute information concerning Veterans to our membership and provides avenues for our members to contact their respective legislators.

### Service

We really want to thank our Legislators for continuing to support us with the grant that allows us to employ our Department Service Officers. The work they do for our Veterans in the Commonwealth is amazing, to date over 5 MILLION dollars have been awarded due to their dedication and compassion for our Veterans

### Other

Commander, Officers and members, the Department of Pennsylvania welcomes all tp the GREAT Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We hope that this location and AMVETS National Headquarters has a long relationship

# Report of Kyle Blake, NEC

## Department of Virginia

# National District II

National Commander Johnson, National Officers, Members of the National Executive Committee and fellow AMVETS.

### Membership

VA is ranked at #21 for annual membership, sitting at 1,732 members statewide.

Department ranking by percentage at #3 with a growth rate at 4.06%.

Department ranking by new members at #8, with 74 new members statewide.

We have one new post, Post#11 Woodstock, Commander Ken Moneagle. March 2025 opening.

### Programs

Finished the year with 100% participation by all posts.

Department of Virginia reported over \$1 million in programs this past year.

We will be entering into the ROTC/JROTC season in the next few months. We have ordered additional ROTC Awards from the Quarter Master and they have been received.

Because of some of the disconnects with National this year, we were not able to send anyone to the Founding Forward Conference. National never let us know if our submissions were approved or not. Additionally, we received no word from National about our Americanism submissions this year as well. I sent and called several times and never received a response.

National sent out a list of all our posts in the Department of Virginia. There were several discrepancies on that list. It was showing 6 Posts that I have never heard of or have lost their Charters. I talked to National a few years ago and tried to get them removed, but they still are showing up. I contacted them again last month to try and get it corrected again. Its no wonder why we have not been receiving 100% reporting recognition at the National Conferences.

AMVETS collaborates with local veteran care centers and VA hospitals to enhance the quality of care provided to veterans. We work closely with healthcare professionals to ensure veterans have access to the best medical services and support systems available.

Our outreach programs include Meals-on-Wheels, which delivers nutritious meals to veterans in need, ensuring they have access to healthy food. Additionally, we offer peer support programs where veterans can connect with fellow veterans for emotional and social support.

### Service

Each Post has been conducting various services to assist/support veterans and their communities, and has represented our District very well.

### Legislative

AMVETS is actively involved in championing legislative initiatives that benefit veterans. During this legislative period, several bills have been passed to improve veterans' services and benefits:

- HB2397: Virginia Growth and Opportunity Act - Expands eligibility for regional councils to receive grants, allowing for more comprehensive support services for veterans.
- HB2029: Real Property Tax Exemption for Elderly and Disabled Individuals - Revises provisions to provide tax exemptions for elderly and disabled veterans, easing their financial burden.
- SB740: Unconscious Bias and Cultural Competency Training - Requires continuing education for medical professionals to include training on unconscious bias and cultural competency, ensuring veterans receive culturally sensitive care.

AMVETS remains committed to advocating for veterans' rights and well-being, working tirelessly to ensure they receive the support and recognition they deserve.

### Upcoming Events

- NEC meeting March
- DEC meeting March
- District II meeting April





# Report of Kyle Blake, NEC Department of Virginia (*continued*)

## National District II

### Other

Our VA Posts statewide continue to grow in membership and are monthly active in their communities. Veterans serving Veterans. Statewide we have growth in our Red Fridays. Memberships are also growing in our Ladies, Sons, and Riders. Continue to work on MALS and looking forward to opening a new post in the state of Virginia, at the request of local Veterans.





# National District III

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# Report of Earl Hood

## National District III Commander

# National District III

### Membership

Third district is maintaining and expect to exceed their membership count by the March NEC meeting in Washington Pennsylvania. Florida has the second largest membership with over 16,000 members. I ask all departments to review their membership roster and remove all deceased members. First Vice District Commander Mark Frederick expressed his concerns about Arkansas and starting a department in Mississippi.

### Upcoming Events

The Third district had their Spring meeting in Port Royal South Carolina, February 1st. The meeting was very productive. Three national officer (National Commander Horace Johnson, National Judge Advocate Frederick Bates, and National Finance Officer Kelley McFarlain) from the third district were present, Each department gave their state convention dates.

### Programs

Every Post in the district has reported at least one report for the January to June reporting period except Arkansas. Third district Second Vice Commander Jeffrey Fisher along with the district first vice volunteered to assist any department needing help with programs reporting.

### Legislative

Tennessee is working on several resolutions concerning legislative. You can read more about them from Tennessee report.

### Other

This concludes my report, and I move for its adoption at the proper time.



# Report of Earnestine Doubek, NEC Department of Alabama

## National District III

### Membership

Department of Alabama NEC Report February 15, 2025. The Department of Alabama has six active Posts, total of 787 members which includes 667 paid up for life members.

The Department's Programs from July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, generated a value of \$86, 462.02. This includes the cost of volunteer hours, mileage, cash donations, and activity cost.

### Post Activities and Contributions

Post 7 remains active in veteran support, particularly in housing homeless veterans and raising awareness about veteran suicide through community displays. Their membership in the Daleville Area Chamber of Commerce ensures that AMVETS information reaches newcomers at Fort Novosel, and the Chamber recently recognized the post as "Member of the Month."

Post 21 continues its free veteran breakfast every second Saturday and played a key role in establishing the first Veterans Treatment Court in Limestone County, now one year old. This court has eight volunteers and six participants, with the post securing an ALL-RISE grant to fund a Clinical Program Director. Additionally, Post 21 also sponsors Boy Scout Troop 7236.

Post 23 focuses on maintaining the Veterans Memorial Scenic Overlook year-round.

Meanwhile, Post 1955 contributed to veteran remembrance by laying a wreath on the Space Force memorial stone at Roselawn Cemetery during the Wreaths Across America ceremony on December 14, 2024. The post also sponsored a birthday party for residents of Tutt Fann State Nursing Home in Huntsville on December 27, 2024.

### Upcoming Events

1. Virtual SEC Meeting: February 15, 2025
2. Post 21 Horse, Pony, and Mule Fun Day: April 26, 2025, Answered Prayers Farm, 5857 Stateline Rd., Taft, TN 38488
3. JROTC awards and certificates, April and May 2025

4. Memorial Day ceremonies, May 26, 2025
5. Post 1955 pancake breakfast, June 14, 2025
6. Department of Alabama Annual Meeting, June 21, 2025

### Legislative

SB67 Proposes changes to the leadership of the State Department of Veteran affairs by allowing the Governor to appoint the Commissioner, shifting the board's role to an advisory capacity. HB64 Seek to make Juneteenth a state holiday. HB22 Aim to designate Election Day as a state holiday.



# Report of Terry Reece, NEC Department of Arkansas

## National District III

### Membership

Arkansas is working hard to increase their membership. Currently Arkansas has 415 members. Arkansas is seeking help in getting deceased members off their roster. The department is working hard to start a new post in Harrison Arkansas. In January three of the five posts attempted to contact all members on their roster to update their information.

### Upcoming Events

The Arkansas state convention will be in Mountain View Arkansas. The dates have not been confirmed.

### Programs

Post 62 and Post 63 have bingo monthly for their post fundraiser. Post 7 has bingo weekly on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Post 63 provides transportation to Memphis VAMC on request. Memphis VAMC is a three-hour roundtrip. Post 7 has two members that clean the veteran's monument downtown monthly. The department of Arkansas donated five hundred dollars to assist in building a deck and wheelchair ramp for an elderly AMVETS member. Six AMVETS members assisted in building the deck and ramp.

### Other

Arkansas is asking National to use; amvetspost7mv@gmail.com for an email to relate any information concerning AMVETS. This concludes my report, and I move for its adoption at the proper time.



# Report of PDC A.J. John, NEC Department of Florida

# National District III

## Membership

As we begin the new year the Department of Florida has 16,196 members on the roll. We are projecting 18,500 members by the end of the membership year. We have started training our post members on using the Content Contact email app. This will be a good tool to use in the area of retention. The post will be able to send out mass emails to encourage renewals and keep members informed on events at the post and the community. The use of the Constant Contact app will help the post Membership Commanders keep the Department Membership Commander aware of the membership processes within their post.

## Programs

Department of Florida programs continues our goal of training, advising and reporting all programs that enhance the quality of life for the veterans, their families and our communities. Comparing the figures from the last reporting period we see the positive influences we have on our communities as well as the incredible dedication and volunteer efforts of the AMVETS membership throughout Florida. Program values: \$5,194,448.63, Cost of hours: 4,725,910.06, Mileage: \$110,231.10, Donations: \$186,195.05, Activity cost: \$172,112.42. We continually support one another through numerous fundraising activities and events which instill a sense of pride and purpose as AMVETS. Veterans Serving Veterans. The program Reporting training sessions continue to focus on areas in need of improvement while promoting areas that are successful.

## Other

The Department of Florida Service Foundation paid out a total of \$47,410.48 from the Disaster Relief Fund in support of Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton. This amounted to 31 applications filed with 24 applications being processed and approved by the Service Foundation Trustees. The Foundation would like to thank Florida AMVETS members for their continued support for this fund.

The Department of Florida would like to report that AMVETS post 81 in Fort Myers, FL has been rebuilt and is now open and functioning. They are again providing

support to its membership and the community. Post 81 would like to express within Florida and around the country that assisted the post during the recovery. Post 81 was severely damaged by Hurricane Ian on September 28, 2022. The post leadership and members would like to express their gratitude to National Commander Horace Johnson and the Department Officers for joining them during the grand reopening celebration.

## Upcoming Events

National Commander Horace Johnson testimony will be held July 19, 2025 at the Rosen Centre Hotel 9840 International Dr, Orlando FL , 32819.

Department of Florida Convention will be held June 17-22 at the Rosen Centre Hotel, 9840 International Drive, Orlando, FL, 32819.

Commander, this concludes my report and I move for adoption.



# Report of Brett N. Colbert, NEC Department of Georgia

## National District III

### Membership

As of January 2025, Department 1st Vice Cmdr Nita Wiggs reports having 1,890 total members of which 1,640 are life members, and 240 are annual members. During the months of February and March, Posts will be scheduling and hosting membership drives across the state. Each Post is committed to, and actively updating their membership rosters. Removal of duplicates and deceased members from their rosters is a priority.

### Other

Nothing to report

### Upcoming Events

Department Spring SEC is April 5-6, 2025 and will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn, in Warner Robins, GA. Georgia's State Convention will be held June 20-22, 2025 and will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn, Warner Robins, GA.

### Programs

Department 2nd Vice Cmdr Wanda Allen reports that 100% of Georgia's posts reported at least 1 program during the July-December 2024 reporting period. The total value of reporting for the July-December reporting period was in excess of \$2 million. Program highlights since the last NEC report include Veterans Day programs, Posts hosting community Christmas parties in which less fortunate children were given Christmas presents, holiday meal boxes (Thanksgiving and Christmas) were distributed to less fortunate families within the veteran communities. As of February 17, 2025, 67% (8 out of 12) of Georgia's posts have reported at least one program during the current reporting period. 2nd Vice Cmdr Allen will be hosting a training session during the April SEC for any members who want to understand how to report programs and will also host an informal preview of Airtable for any members who will be running for Department 2nd Vice Commander.

### Legislative

Both the Department and Post 10 will be sending one member each to represent the state of GA during Law Week.

### Service

Nothing to report.



# Report of Gary L. Stuart, NEC Department of Louisiana

## National District III

### Membership

As of Feb. 13 2025, The Department of Louisiana has 6 post with a total membership of 228 mal, 780 life and 124 annual members for a total of 1132 members.

### Upcoming Events

Our next SEC meeting will be the weekend of June 20 - 21 in Springfield La. Post 68 hosting.

### Programs

The Department is at 66% reporting. The four reporting post are reporting a total value of \$145,753.63 for this reporting period. Some of the programs are, Americanism, community service, fundraising, remember me, supporting veterans and family, scouting, working with the homeless just to name a few.

### Service

The Department held a meet and greet in Shreveport La. to generate an interest in forming a Post there.

### Other

The Department will be raffling off a 2025 Harley Road Glide. Tickets will go on sale soon for \$20.00 a ticket. The winning ticket will be drawn at the 2026 National Convention in Orlando Florida.





# Report of Janice Shelton, NEC Department of South Carolina

## National District III

### Membership

There are six Posts and one At Large Post (Dept. of SC). There are 1,576 members of all categories with 1,220 active members in SC at years end.

### Upcoming Events

Flag Retirement Ceremony February 19th; 1st Quarter SEC March 8-9, Post 33 Ridgeway, Sc; National Foundation Scholarship requests mid-January through April 30th, Memorial Day Observance May 26th.

### Programs

Noted categories: Community Service, Americanism, Remembering Me (Red Shirt Friday), Support for Veterans/Families, and Fund Raising. The Department of South Carolina reported the following year end total for 2024: Volunteers (1717 volunteers for 14,816 hours); Travel 27,250 miles for a total of \$451,819.00 with 100% reporting.

### Legislative

Posts are directed to lend their support for House and Senate bills as requested by National.

### Service

Scholarships (ROTC and JROTC) for 2024, 34 schools requested, 45 Medals/Certificates awarded.

### Other

The Department of SC held a 50/50 raffle to raise money to support the Equine Heart Healers Ranch in Ware Shoals, SC which is a non-profit group that teaches horse riding and provides a place for Active Duty, Veterans, First Responders, and their families a place to safely decompress from the ravages of PTSD. The Department approved donations to the Fisher House in Charleston, SC and the Veterans Victory House in Walterboro, SC. Brenda Colwell, wife of Department Officer James Colwell, donated a hand made quilt for use by the Department for future fund-raising activities. 16 boxes of hygiene items, cleaning supplies, t-shirts and socks were donated and delivered to Morgan, NC for hurricane disaster victims. 25 hygiene packs were donated to the Military Vets Motorcycle Club for distribution to homeless Veterans in SC.

# Report of Lee Ann Adams, NEC Department of Tennessee

## National District III

### Membership

TN has 17 Posts, with a total of 2193 members, including: 1834 Life Members; 247 Annual Renewals; 75 New Annual Members, and 517 MAL.

### Upcoming Events

- TN. S.E.C. Meeting, April 4-5, 2025, at Post 90, Decatur, TN
- TN State Convention, June 17-22, 2025, in Gatlinburg, TN at the Glenstone Hotel.

### Programs

TN Posts continue to excel in the scope of ‘veterans helping veterans,’ as TN AMVETS donated 47,438 hours in service, mileage and activity costs for a ‘Programs Value’ of \$1,425,330.76.

- Americanism and AMVETS Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse essays/posters will be judged at the Spring S.E.C. Meeting.
- TN is actively preparing for the presentation of more than 170 JROTC/ROTC certificates, medals and a U.S. Flags for schools with an active program.

### Legislative

TN is actively pursuing the following legislative actions:

- Disable the Veteran Tax Equalization/Relief, making changes to TCA 67-5-704(2) state law calculations, to stop penalizing 100% disabled veterans for property tax relief based on yearly market value fluctuations.
- Establishment of a state dedicated method to raise money dedicated to veteran needs/programs.
- Changing the eligibility terms of the TN sponsored ‘Helping Heroes Grant’ • Exploring state support for Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury for veterans that may benefit.

### Service

Working with the 917 Society, TN is preparing for our annual Pocket Constitution Program, assisting in educating 8th grade students in the principles of the U.S. Constitution. We hope to top the 26,000 Pocket Constitutions distributed by TN AMVETS Posts last year.

### Other

TN AMVETS participated in the annual legislative push at ‘Veterans Day on the Hill’ in Nashville, TN.

TN has rejoined TNVet, an organization composed of multi-veteran service organizations seated at one table to promote legislation for our veterans. More than a lobby group, TNVet provides an opportunity to build relationships with other VSOs for the good of ALL Veterans.

The “Department of TN College Scholarship Packets” will be reviewed by the committee at our Spring S.E.C.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Adams,  
N.E.C. Tennessee



# National District IV

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*District IV Commander, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio reports not received by deadline*



# Report of Richard Shea Jr, NEC Department of Illinois

# National District IV

## Membership

AMVETS Department of Illinois membership was 6791 members in 2023-2024, Are Department has gone through a vigorous accounting of our membership rolls to ensure it's accuracy. Some of our posts are still having issues with the new program for membership and we our working with them to resolve any continuing issues. We offer a wide variety of membership tools to gain attention and set us apart from other department VSO's. We offer online capabilities to join and we are constantly trying to improve our coverage and remain at the fore front of Illinois Veterans' Organizations.

## Programs

We at Illinois AMVETS are proud to report that we again achieved 100% in program reporting for this last year. This has been an ongoing tradition for us for numerous years, but like the membership program are members are having a bit of a learning curve with the new program. We are diligently helping as much as we can to showcase what our members do for their veterans and communities.

Two of our top programs that we take great pride in is our "Operation Red Sleigh" where with donations from individuals, posts and the IL Service Foundation. We were able to help 13 Veteran families with gifts and a Christmas dinner. It has been a great program for us every year and it just keeps growing. Second is our ROTC & JROTC program that has been a very active program for many decades, we give out annually around 400 medals to high school and college students throughout our state and overseas, this program is funded by the IL Service Foundation and personal donations, we will be handing out those medals at award programs in the coming months.

## Service

AMVETS Department of Illinois currently has 3 Department VSO's located throughout the State. All VSO's are working thoroughly and effectively to assist Veteran and their families by filing a multitude of claims bringing in millions of dollars worth of benefits to the Veterans in the State of Illinois. We couldn't be more proud of what our service officer's do.

## Legislation

The new 103rd Illinois General Assembly is getting ready to start it's spring session, IL AMVETS is currently working with other VSO's on a combined Veteran Lobby Day at our State Capital that IL AMVETS is leading in Springfield IL it will be on May 20th. If you have any questions referring to any veteran related Illinois legislation please call or email our Executive Director Joe Bartley, joe@ilamvets.org (217)528-4713

## Communications

We have a full time communications Director at Illinois AMVETS State Headquarters, Ashley Murphy oversees all IL AMVETS PR, social media and communications. If you want something shared, disseminated or to be noticed in Illinois call or email

Ashley Murphy at (217) 528-4713 or ashley@ilamvets.org.

## Upcoming Events

The Department of Illinois held its SEC in February via zoom, we seem to get a better turnout for this than an in-person meeting with our weather being so unpredictable at that time of year, plus it saves our department some money that we can use elsewhere. Our Department convention will be held in Springfield IL at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel on 20-22 June 2025.

Any questions please contact our State Headquarters at (217)528-4713.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Shea Jr  
NEC Illinois



# Report of Richard Caldwell, NEC Department of Indiana

# National District IV

## Membership

We have attended many military events across the state seeking new members. Most recent event was the Indiana Military Legislature Day @ our State Capitol. AMVETS Post 99 had a table set with AMVETS information. My understanding it was a successful event for them.

## Upcoming Events

We have our Spring conference coming up April 4 - April 6, 2025 in Indianapolis, IN @ Sheraton Inn at Keystone at the Crossing. SEC meeting also along with our Indiana Special Olympics basketball finals in Westfield, IN Pacers training/ practice facility. We are the longest support group for the IN Special Olympic events for 25 year term.

## Programs

We just recently finished our Indiana Special Olympics "Polar Plunge" fundraising event. Many communities participate in the frigid waters with donor support. The Greater Gary AMVETS Post 6 Community Outreach support tour for schools was established in 2024. They provide book bags and school supplies to school age children in northwest Indiana. They wish to reach more schools next year.

## Legislative

Our Legislative Director, Ron Martin, has been on a Veteran Coalition network that meets with our elected Indiana Representatives in obtaining more state benefits for all veterans across Indiana. This year they have presented 11 Senate bills and 21 House bills for improving the veterans needs in our state.

## Service

We have 5 VSO's across our state that have allowed brought millions of dollars for our many veterans. Our VSO's have really helped the many veterans who were always given the not eligible answers from the VA. We have a dedicated female VSO for our women veterans also.

## Other

Our state has a new learning curve with a new President, new Governor, new U.S. Senator, 3 new U.S. Congress seats, & new Indiana Veterans Affairs Commission Director. Sometimes change is good and we look forward to a prosperous year.



# Report of Barry Remington, NEC Department of Iowa

## National District IV

### Membership

Membership is hanging around where we were at this time last year. Some posts are ok with their current members. The biggest problem is the younger veterans not having the time to join and be active in their local post.

### Upcoming Events

The next SEC meeting will be on March 29-30 at Post 49 in Cedar Falls. Our Department Convention will be June 20-22 at Post 107 in Richmond Iowa.

### Programs

Programs reporting is still a problem with our smaller posts. They don't have anyone to report their activities and do not notify the department with their activities so that our 2nd Vice can report them.

### Legislative

The State Legislatures just started their session for 2025. Several of our post members attend Vets On the Hill where they could talk to their representative about Vets Benefits and bills that should be passed to assist veterans.

### Service

Post 49 has a very good relationship with the University of Northern Iowa ROTC Cadets. They help the post whenever we have a steak fry, first fry or any other activity.. They will be commissioning 13 cadets this Spring as 2nd Lieutenants.

### Other

January was sad day for the Department. Our Department Commander, Ron Kirkland passed away from a long battle of diseases brought on by Agent Orange. He had two tours in Vietnam with the Seebes. He battled courageously but could not overcome the diseases he had. He was a person that was not afraid of anyone or any thing. He brought a new energy into the post, which he was commander for 3 years. He will be missed by anyone that had the pleasure knowing Ron. He loved the AMVETS and loved to play golf.



# Report of Deanna Maynard, NEC Department of Kentucky

## National District IV

### Upcoming Events

Our next SEC will be April 12th, 2025 in Owensboro, KY, hosted by AMVETS Post 75.

### Programs

We did place flags and wreaths for veterans in the Counties and at the VA Cemeteries. We hosted over a 1000 children for the Christmas gifts and food. We donated a variety of items to the VA Hospitals. Countless hours spent at War Memorials in the Counties of Kentucky. We held Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for Veterans.

### Other

The flash floods has destroyed a lot of properties throughout Eastern Kentucky, and tornadoes in Western Kentucky.



# Report of Doug Johnson, NEC Department of Missouri

# National District IV

## Membership

AMVETS Department of Missouri currently has 30 active posts with a total of 3319 current members (633 annual and 2686 life members).

The Commanders and 1st Vice Commanders of Membership at the Posts are encouraged to work on pursuing annual renewals for the 307 members that expired on 8/31/2024, the 415 members that expired on 8/31/2023, the 372 members that expired on 8/31/2022, the 272 members whose membership expired on 8/31/2021, and the 3 that expired on 8-31-2020. This additional 1369 Veterans would bring membership up to 4688! For a secondary project, these members will be contacted to encourage re-joining the organization.

The above numbers are based on what is currently in NetForum. There are still several membership errors in NetForum as everything transitioned back from the Springly software. These are gradually getting corrected.

There are locations within the Department that are being evaluated and considered for new posts.

## Upcoming Events

Dates for 2025 Department SEC meetings are as follows: April 12-13 and October 4-5.

Dates for 2025 Department Convention are as follows: June 27-29, 2025.

The April SEC meeting will take place at AMVETS Post 42, 555 Joachim Ave, Herculaneum, MO 63048.

All subsequent dates have locations that have yet to be determined.

## Programs

Programs for the reporting period of January 1 – June 30, 2024, 30 out of 30 posts (100%) reported a total of 725 events (AMVETS 253 events and Riders 472 events). These reports included 5,797 volunteers (AMVETS 1,723 volunteers and Riders 4,074 volunteers) who performed 70,043 hours of service

(AMVETS 9,648 hours and Riders 60,395 hours) that covered 224,621 miles (AMVETS 52,977 miles and Riders 171,644 miles). The overall value of reported programs is \$2,201,002.96 (AMVETS \$325,732.55 and Riders \$1,875,270.41).

Programs for the reporting period of July 1 – December 31, 2024, 30 out of 30 posts (100%) reported a total of 841 events (AMVETS 382 events and Riders 459 events) with 8,114 volunteers (AMVETS 2,633 volunteers and Riders 5,481 volunteers) who performed 75,738 hours of services (AMVETS 18,823 hours and Riders 56,915 hours) that covered 308,110 miles (AMVETS 84,485 miles and Riders 223,625 miles). The overall value of reported programs is \$2,396,034.89 (AMVETS \$625,566.28 and Riders \$1,770,468.61).

Grand totals for 2024 programs reporting include the following: 1,566 events (AMVETS 635 events and Riders 931 events), 13,911 volunteers (AMVETS 4,356 volunteers and Riders 9,555 volunteers), 145,781 hours (AMVETS 28,471 hours and Riders 117,310 hours), 532,731 miles (AMVETS 137,462 miles and Riders 395,269 miles), and \$4,597,037.85 value (AMVETS \$951,298.83 and Riders \$3,645,739.02).

## Legislation

The below House and Senate bills and resolutions of interest to veterans in Missouri reflect those that have been filed for the 1st Regular Session (January 8 – May 16, 2025) of the 103rd General Assembly. If these pass, the proposed effective date is 8/28/2025 unless otherwise noted. These bills and resolutions can also be followed on these websites: <https://house.mo.gov> or <http://senate.mo.gov>. The bills that are marked with asterisks (\*\*) are the focus of MAVO's (Missouri Association of Veterans' Organizations) legislative agenda for 2025.

1. House Bill (HB) 80 – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060). Creates provisions relating to veterans. \*Prefiled on 12/2/2024. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025.
2. House Bill (HB) 81 – Sponsored by Dave Griffith



# Report of Doug Johnson, NEC

## Department of Missouri (*continued*)

# National District IV

(R – District 060). Requires the department of transportation to install signs to honor recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. \*Prefiled on 12/2/2024. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025.

3. House Bill (HB) 151 – Sponsored by Michael O'Donnell (R – District 095). Establishes a special license plate for veterans of military operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. \*Prefiled on 12/2/2024. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025.

4. House Bill (HB) 399 – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060). Creates provisions relating to compensation for assisting with veterans' benefits matters. \*Prefiled on 12/5/2024. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025. \*Referred to General Laws on 2/12/2025.

5. House Bill (HB) 419 – Sponsored by Don Mayhew (R – District 124). Clarifies that military personnel are eligible for in-state tuition for undergraduate and graduate degree programs. \*Prefiled on 12/6/2024. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025. \*Referred to Veterans and Armed Forces on 1/22/2025. \*Public hearing completed on 1/27/2025. \*Executive session completed on 2/3/2025 – Voted do pass. \*Referred to Rules – Administrative on 2/6/2025.

6. House Bill (HB) 552 – Sponsored by Will Jobe (D – District 021). This bill establishes the “Missouri Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption” which provides a tiered property tax exemption system for veterans with disabilities. The exemptions are based on a disability percentage, certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. For tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2026, an annual exemption will be given for a property that is used as a qualified residence owned by a veteran with a disability, limited to the amounts as follows:

- (1) For veterans with service-connected disability of 50% or more but less than 70%, the annual exemption is \$2,500;
- (2) For veterans with a service-connected disability

of 70% or more but less than 100%, the annual exemption is \$5,000;

(3) For veterans with service-connected disability of 100%, the annual exemption is equal to 100% of the tax assessed on the qualified residence; and

(4) For a taxpayer who is the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected and who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as a recipient of dependency and indemnity compensation under Federal law, the annual exemption is equal to 100% of the tax assessed on the qualified residence. If a surviving spouse of a veteran sells the qualified residence, an amount may be transferred to his or her new residence as long as it is used as his or her primary residence and he or she does not remarry. No exemption will be allowed for the tax year in which the surviving spouse remarries.

The bill requires each taxpayer that is granted the exemption to reapply on an annual basis unless the veteran has a service-connected disability rating of 100% and is deemed permanently and totally disabled, as specified in the bill. The provisions of this bill will sunset six years after the effective date. \*Prefiled on 12/13/2024. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025.

7. House Bill (HB) 700 – Sponsored by Aaron Crossley (D – District 029). Authorizes the “Missouri Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption” \*Prefiled on 12/2/2024. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025.

8. House Bill (HB) 786 – Sponsored by Aaron Crossley (D – District 029). Designates the “WWII Robert Earl Sauls Memorial Highway” in Jackson County. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed 1/9/2025.

9. House Bill (HB) 823 – Sponsored by Yolonda Fountain Henderson (D – District 085). Prohibits a landlord from evicting a tenant who is a veteran unless illegal conduct occurs on the premises. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/9/2025. Second read completed 1/10/2025.

## Report of Doug Johnson, NEC Department of Missouri (*continued*)

## National District IV

10. House Bill (HB) 909 – Sponsored by Jim Schulte (R – District 049). Establishes a special license plate for veterans of military operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/15/2025. Second read completed 1/16/2025. \*Referred to Transportation on 2/19/2025.

11. House Bill (HB) 921 – Sponsored by Mike Jones (R – District 012). Authorizes the “Disabled Veteran Property Tax Relief Act” relating to a property tax exemption for certain disabled veterans. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/16/2025. Second read completed on 1/21/2025.

12. House Bill (HB) 948 – Sponsored by Michael Johnson (D = District 023). Establishes a program that provides wellness checks for at-risk veterans. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/16/2025. Second read completed on 1/21/2025.

13. House Bill (HB) 954 – Sponsored by Stephanie Boykin (D – District 070). Provides federal Servicemember Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protection to National Guard members called to state duty. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/21/2025. Second read completed on 1/22/2025.

14. House Bill (HB) 1088 – Sponsored by Maria Smith (D – District 074). Designates the “COL Elmer R Parrish Memorial Bridge” in Pulaski County. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/28/2025. Second read completed on 1/28/2025.

15. House Bill (HB) 1106 – Sponsored by Bruce Sassmann (R – District 061). Designates the “POW/ MIA CPT Steven N Bezold Memorial Highway” in Montgomery County. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/29/2025. Second read completed on 1/30/2025.

16. House Bill (HB) 1355 – Sponsored by Ben Baker (R – District 160). Modifies provisions relating to military license plates to include the Space Force. \*Introduced and first read completed on 2/18/2025. Second read completed on 2/19/2025.

17. \*\*House Joint Resolution (HJR) 7 – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060). Proposes a constitutional amendment dividing state revenues from gaming activities between public institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education and the administration of the Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC). \*Prefiled on 12/2/2024. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025. \*Referred to Ways and Means on 1/30/2025. \*Public Hearing completed on 2/10/2025. \*Executive Session continued on 2/17/2025 with action postponed. \*Next House hearing on 2/24/2025.

18. House Joint Resolution (HJR) 41 – Sponsored by Bill Lucas (R – District 115). Proposes an amendment to the Constitution of Missouri relating to a property and income tax exemption for certain disabled veterans. \*Prefiled on 1/7/2025. First read completed on 1/8/2025. Second read completed on 1/9/2025.

19. House Joint Resolution (HJR) 64 – Sponsored by Mike Costlow (R – District 108). Proposes a constitutional amendment granting homestead and personal property tax exemptions to certain veterans proportional to the veteran’s disability rating. \*First read completed on 1/15/2025. Second read completed on 1/16/2025.

20. House Joint Resolution (HJR) 66 – Sponsored by Mike Jones (R – District -012). Proposes a constitutional amendment granting property tax exemptions to certain disabled veterans. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/16/2025. Second read completed on 1/21/2025.

21. House Joint Resolution (HJR) 74 – Sponsored by Jeremy Dean (D – District -132). Proposes a constitutional amendment relating to property tax exemptions for certain disabled veterans. \*Introduced and first read completed on 1/28/2025. Second read completed on 1/29/2025.

22. Senate Bill (SB) 210 – Sponsored by Angela Mosley (D – District 13). Modifies the compensation of certain state employees in positions within Missouri Veterans’

## Report of Doug Johnson, NEC Department of Missouri (*continued*)

## National District IV

Homes. This act provides that state employees in support care assistance positions for Missouri Veterans' Homes shall receive a wage in the amount of at least \$15 per hour and no more than \$22 per hour. An employee receiving a wage greater than \$22 per hour before January 1, 2026, shall be entitled to that wage on and after January 1, 2026. The wage is effective on January 1, 2026, with an annual adjustment based on inflation every following year. \*Last action: Second reading completed on 2/3/2025 and referred to Veterans and Military Affairs Committee.

23. Senate Bill (SB) 300 – Sponsored by Steven Roberts (D – District 5). Modifies provisions relating to compensation for assisting or advising in veteran benefits matters. This act provides that no person shall receive compensation for advising or assisting, or referring to another person for such purposes, any individual with regard to any veterans benefits matter, as described in the act, unless such individual provides a written agreement containing the terms of the fees, provides certain disclosures, and complies with requirements under federal law. Additionally, no person shall advertise for such services without including a disclosure as specified in the act. Furthermore, no person shall receive compensation for any services rendered before the date on which a notice of disagreement is filed with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and no person shall guarantee the receipt of specific veteran benefits. Any person who violates this act shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor. \*Last action: Second reading completed on 2/13/2025 and referred to Veterans and Military Affairs Committee.

24. Senate Bill (SB) 566 – Sponsored by Sandy Crawford (R – District 028). Modifies provisions relating to certain veteran-owned small businesses. Current law requires any veteran who receives a small business loan through the State Treasurer's linked deposit program to complete a boots-to-business program approved by the Department of Economic Development. This act makes participation in such program optional. \*Last action: first reading completed 1/15/2025.

25. Senate Bill (SB) 664 – Sponsored by Rick Brattin (R – District 31). Establishes the "Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment and Recovery Act." This act establishes the "Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment and Recovery Act." The act creates the "Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment and Recovery Fund", which will reimburse eligible facilities that provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy to veterans diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury and be used to conduct studies on the use of alternative therapies for such conditions. The act specifies the eligibility criteria and requirements for veterans, facilities, and health care practitioners for reimbursement. The veteran shall not be charged by the facility for the cost of the therapy. The Missouri Veterans' Commission shall compile an annual report with data about the treatment of hyperbaric oxygen therapy and its effectiveness, as set forth in the act. The Department of Health and Senior Services shall award funds to entities to study the use of alternative therapies to treat veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder and brain injuries and shall annually submit a report to the Governor by January 30 containing findings and recommendations relating to this act. \*Last Action: First reading completed 2/3/2025.

26. Senate Bill (SB) 716 – Sponsored by Travis Fitzwater (R – District 10). Creates the "Missouri Disabled Veterans' Dependents Tuition Waiver" to provide college tuition waivers for the children, stepchildren, and spouses of certain veterans. \*Last Action: First reading on 2/17/2025.

27. \*\*Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 14 – Sponsored by Tony Luetkemeyer (R – District 34). Exempts certain disabled veterans from property taxes. Current constitutional provisions exempt from property tax all real property used as a homestead by a former prisoner of war who has a total service-connected disability. This constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, removes the requirement that the former prisoner of war have a total service-connected disability. This amendment also authorizes a property tax exemption for real property used as a homestead by disabled veterans, as defined in the amendment.

## Report of Doug Johnson, NEC Department of Missouri (*continued*)

## National District IV

The amount of the exemption shall be equal to \$5,000 for veterans with a disability rating of 50-69%, and a total exemption for veterans with a disability rating of 70-100%. \*Last Action: Second Read and Referred S Economic and Workforce Development Committee on 2/6/2025. \*Effective Date: Upon voter approval.

28. \*\*Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 46 – Sponsored by Jill Carter (R – District 32). Authorizes a property tax exemption for disabled veterans. Current law provides a property tax exemption for all real property used as a homestead by former prisoners of war with a total service-connected disability. This constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, extends such property tax exemption to all veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who have a total service-connected disability. \*Last Action: Hearing conducted in the Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee on 2/12/2025. \*Effective Date: Upon voter approval.

### Service

Department of Missouri has 4 Service Officers in the St. Louis area (St. Louis VA Medical Center - Jefferson Barracks, John Cochran VA Medical Center, and O'Fallon City Hall) to assist with Veterans and VA claims. James McKay is at John Cochran VA Medical Center on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Martin Payne covers Tuesdays and Thursdays at that location. Martin Payne is also at St. Louis VA Medical Center – Jefferson Barracks (JB) on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Carolyn Truvillion covers Tuesdays and Thursdays at JB. William Sifford works 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at O'Fallon City Hall on Mondays and Wednesdays. Two service officers also volunteer at H.E.R.O.E.S. Care in High Ridge, MO. Carolyn Truvillion is there on Wednesdays and William Sifford is there on Thursdays. The Department is currently seeking a replacement for the Service Officer lost in the Kansas City area along with filling positions in Columbia, Poplar Bluff, and the Springfield area. The long-term plan is to have a Service Officer in each of the 5 VA Hospitals in Missouri and in the VA Clinics.

We have 2 VAVS Reps at 2 of our VA facilities with credentials good through 2026: Klint Oldham is at St.

Louis VA Medical Center – Jefferson Barracks, and James McKay is at John Cochran VA Medical Center in St. Louis.

Ongoing projects throughout the Department continue to include military funerals, homeless Veterans, suicide prevention and awareness, supporting Veterans Hospitals and homes, and supporting JROTC and ROTC programs.

### Communications/PRO

Department Commander Jack Down's project for 2024-2025 is LifeWaters. LifeWaters is a non-profit located in St. Louis, Missouri, that improves the lives of disabled Veterans by offering scuba and scuba certifications as part of recreational water therapy. LifeWaters teaches adaptive scuba diving to those with mobility challenges and each year they take a terminally ill Veteran on a Hero Dive. Please refer to their website [www.lifewaters.org](http://www.lifewaters.org) for further information. If anyone would like to donate to the Commander's project, please send checks to "AMVETS Department of Missouri" with "Commander's Project" identified in the memo. Please send to the following address: AMVETS Department of Missouri PO Box 190 Willard, MO 65781 You can also send a check to "LifeWaters c/o Jack Downs" to the following address: Jack Downs 316 Saint Lawrence Drive Ballwin, MO 63021

There are several projects, programs, and events occurring at posts across the state. Please follow AMVETS Department of Missouri on Facebook along with individual AMVETS posts across the Department.



# Report of Wayne Amborn, NEC Department of Wisconsin

## National District IV

### Membership

The AMVETS Department of Wisconsin Presently has 2645 members of which 2088 are Life, 322 are Annual with 235 at Large Members. We have 54 Posts and 8 Districts in our state.

### Upcoming Events

Spring SEC and commanders Testimonial March 15, 2025 at the Oneida Hotel and Convention Center, 2040 Airport Rd, Greenbay, Wi 54313 (920-471-4997)  
Wisconsin State Convention June 19th to 22nd at the Oneida Hotel and Convention Center.

### Programs

The AMVETS Department of Wisconsin reached 1,000,000 total value in programs reporting. Some posts are still feeling the result of covid and have just started slowly in doing programs.

### Legislative

The state of Wisconsin presently allows those with a VA rating of 100% to receive their property taxes back in an annual refund on their income taxes. There is legislation being promoted to allow any rating of 70% or more to receive that rating amount as a refund also.

### Service

We currently are serving 8 hospitals in the following locations: Iron Mountain, Chippewa Falls, Minneapolis, Madison, King, Milwaukee and Union Grove. Our locations are opening up and closing down as need because of covid outbreaks. Our VAVS are doing what they can for our veterans.

### Other

On January 17th we held our annual winter dance in Waupaca with our Winter SEC the following day. This was held at the VFW Hall in Waupaca. Several Posts donated money to the Commanders Project which is Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin in Racine.



# **National District V**

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*Kansas and Oklahoma reports not received by deadline*



# Report of Deborah L. Wehrli, NEC National District V Commander

## National District V

### Membership

The district membership has increased for a few states. I am working hard to get the annual members to renew. I have been talking to Colorado and working with Rick Young on membership. Texas is working with Kansas and Oklahoma to get departments and posts back on track.

### Upcoming Events

The date for the next SEC meeting in Nebraska will be our Department Convention in Omaha, Nebraska. Also, District V will be meeting at the National Convention for our annual meeting.

### Programs

I visited veterans' homes and the Veterans' hospital. I passed out Christmas cards to the Veterans and put money in their accounts. JROTC and scholarships will be in the works for the coming months.

### Legislative

I went to the Nebraska State Capital on January 31st for the legislative day. I am also on the Veteran Council, where we work with Senators on bills for veterans.

### Service

I have given several speeches to groups at the local Library about AMVETS. Here in the plains, most Veterans have not heard about AMVETS, so I am just getting the word out.



## Report of Carol L. Tschampl-Diesing, NEC Department of Nebraska

## National District V

### Membership

The Department of Nebraska continues to provide grants to cover the cost of a first year membership for new members, resulting in many new members joining in Nebraska recently. However, we are losing out on attracting new life members because of the increased cost and no payment plan being available through National to make the increased fees more manageable. copy of Upcoming Events: - The next Department of Nebraska SEC meeting will be held on February 22, 2025 in Lincoln, Nebraska. - Our state convention is scheduled for May 3, 2025 at the DAV building in Omaha, Nebraska.

### Programs

Americanism awards for Nebraska student winners from last year's contests have finally been received from National and will be handed out to students at our February 22nd SEC meeting for the Department of Nebraska. - We had AMVETS representatives at several funerals held at the Omaha National Cemetery this past quarter. - Christmas visits and gifts were presented to all the veterans in the veterans homes across Nebraska, as well as in one VA hospital. - Our Department is currently coordinating with schools across the state to distribute JROTC awards at the end of the current semester.

### Legislative

We had several AMVETS members representing our organization at the most recent Nebraska Legislation Day. - Many legislative proposals affecting military servicemembers and veterans in NE are currently in session and relate to some of the following areas: reciprocal licensing for out-of-state professionals, like teachers and cosmetologists; military license plates; and proposals to prohibit discrimination based on military and veteran status. - The Homestead Exemption Act, which provides a tax credit on property tax for resident homes, is stalled due to revenue issues. However, they're still trying to get portions of the proposal passed this legislative session. - One of the more critical proposals this legislative session is LB547, which will make it illegal for for-profit companies to charge veterans a fee for helping them to file a VA claim. This proposal does

not apply to licensed lawyers assisting veterans with claims.

### Service

Our members continue to collect and donate a variety of needed items for veterans in the local homeless shelters. - In December, we had volunteers at the Omaha National Cemetery helping to place wreaths on all the grave sites during Wreaths Across America Day.

### Other

The Department of Nebraska continues to host a variety of fundraisers to provide for our carillon project, Department scholarships, and prizes and materials for student programs.





# Report of Murray Strom, NEC Department of North Dakota

## National District V

### Membership

We are working on membership with emphasis of showing what we doing for veterans and community.

### Upcoming Events

State Conference is scheduled for May 16-18 ,2025  
ACOVA is scheduled for February 13-14, 2025. SEC  
and Sad Sack Scrimmage is scheduled for February 15,  
2025.

### Programs

Americanism is getting out to all posts. Flag retirement  
is a big program in all posts. Steele ND Post 20 has a  
free flag exchange program to make sure they flying  
good serviceable American flags.

### Legislative

In the state legislature: there is a bill proposed for military  
members and spouses for licensure reciprocity. A bill  
relating to the naming of bridges for fallen heroes. A  
bill relating to Naming a month Military Appreciation  
Month. A bill relating to property tax relief for disabled  
veterans. A bill relating to a burial medallion program  
to mark all veteran graves. A bill relating to Prisoner of  
War and Missing in Action State Holiday.

### Service

Honor guards are still performing services and more  
often because other honor guards are folding up. Post  
are submitting names of fallen veterans to be honored  
by naming a bridge in remembrance of them.



# Report of Curtis Thomas, NEC Department of Texas

# National District V

## Membership

We have been setting up booths at community festivals, participating in parades and volunteering with local agencies to enhance the AMVETS name. Also we've had membership drives at posts to expand our membership throughout the community.

## Upcoming Events

Our Department Convention will be June 20-22, 2025 at the Holiday Inn Conference Center, 5701 South Broadway Blvd, Tyler, TX, 75704, 903-561-5800

## Programs

We're currently in the process of receiving and delivering JROTC Medals throughout the state. We've also collected and donated new clothing to the homeless veterans, held fundraisers, and cookouts to feed the area homeless veterans. We also continue to support the scouts and Special Olympics.

## Legislative

We continue to monitor our state legislature and at this time there aren't any veterans issues to address.

## Service

Several posts throughout the state perform honor guard duties and escorts during memorial ceremonies. Also post colors for area organizations.



## National District VI

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*District VI Commander, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Oregon reports not received by deadline*



# Report of Terri Good, NEC Department of Alaska

# National District VI

## Membership

Dept., is continuing to work on updating and coordinate membership rosters, clearing up duplicates across the posts and errors. Slowly making progress. Continual efforts by each post to create membership drives through meat raffles, Sports watch parties and prepping for the Superbowl Event. Free meals Working diligently to identify ways to enlist and retain younger members

## Upcoming Events

Preparation for Spring SEC Mar. 22 and Dept. Convention Jun. 7th. Supporting "Purple Up Day" April 15th. Working on criteria for Post and AMVET of year. What we currently have is not all applicable to Dept. of AK. During the spring we will continue to sponsor events and be involved with special Olympics, flag and Memorial Day events

## Programs

Continual efforts by all posts to support local ROTC programs. Through recognition, fundraisers and donations. This is an opportunity to bring new family members to post and something we are striving to promote throughout the state. ROTC has not always been a focus; however we are promoting more in our programs and activities. Dept. making donations to help veterans and families dealing with loss as well as hurricane and fire victims. Posts making donations to veteran families and preparing a community gift drive for seniors and Veterans in need and their families. Collaborated with other nonprofits to provide food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Several volunteers for Wreaths Across America Post 2 Fundraiser Raffle for programs and Last Frontier Honor Flight. 4 Chaplains events. Supported ASYMCA Salute to the Military with special dinner and recognition at post as well as sponsoring table at banquet. Several posts are offering monthly or weekly free breakfast or lunch to veterans

## Legislative

Working on Charitable Gaming changes for AK. Contact with local Senate and Representatives ref homeless veteran needs in AK

## Other

With losing Ken Southerland yr. plus ago as a long-time ED, we finally got one in fall who sadly resigned a few months later. It has certainly been a challenge, and communications have been impacted. Not sure that the Dept. is receiving all the info. being distributed. We are establishing a new email that will be accessible to Dept. CMDR and any future ED

Last, but certainly not least, I and others miss Don Oliver for so many reasons. He may have been a pain in the neck (as...) at times, but there is no doubt about how much he loved AMVETS, his knowledge is not replaceable, plus as he was known to say, he knew where all the skeletons were buried! He was my friend and brother, I will never forget all the support, love and grief he gave me... Thank you Linda for sharing. Rest in Peace Don.



# Report of Bill Vanasdale, NEC Department of Arizona

## National District VI

### Membership

As of the last SEC meeting on November 16 there are 1,178 AMVETS members in Arizona.

### Upcoming Events

The next SEC meeting is March 15. At that time bids are accepted & voted on for the location of out state meeting in June.

### Programs

None to my knowledge

### Legislative

None to my knowledge

### Service

Volunteer hours for 2024 totaled \$50,120.00.

### Other

My apologies for the untimely report. Information is hard to obtain when officers are throughout the state.



# Report of Ronald E. Robinson, Jr., NEC Department of California

# National District VI

The AMVETS Department of California continues to make significant strides in supporting veterans, strengthening membership engagement, and advocating for legislative advancements. As of the latest report, total membership stands at 7,840, with 7,302 members in good standing. However, the exact number of members on the roster remains unclear and requires further verification. A more detailed analysis of branch composition will be necessary to enhance recruitment and retention efforts, ensuring that AMVETS remains an inclusive and growing organization. The department remains committed to refining its retention strategies while identifying effective recruitment approaches to increase overall membership.

**Ron Robinson,**  
**National Executive Committeeman (NEC),**  
**AMVETS Dept. CA**

The AMVETS Department of California has actively engaged in numerous programs that directly impact veterans and their families. The Department has emphasized the importance of continuously reporting volunteer hours, programs, and community engagement activities. Training has been provided through various formats, including briefings, emails, and Zoom meetings, as well as individual coaching upon request. Members of AMVETS California have dedicated their efforts to supporting hospitalized veterans, assisting homeless veterans and their families, mentoring youth, and distributing essential resources such as food, clothing, and suicide awareness materials. Post grant disbursements have been instrumental in aiding various initiatives, ensuring that veterans receive support with utilities, food, and other necessities.

The AMVETS ONE program remains a cornerstone of the Department's outreach, as it continues to expand suicide awareness efforts across California. A statewide resource page is being developed to provide veterans with direct access to critical support services, while the 24/7 National Crisis Line (988, Press 1) remains prominently displayed at every AMVETS event. Many AMVETS Posts have also begun implementing monthly buddy checks to reach out to members, ensuring

that those in need receive necessary assistance. The AMVETS ONE team is currently preparing for its National Tour, "Leaving No Veteran Behind," scheduled for May 5-12, 2025, covering cities across Texas and Arizona, engaging with VA facilities, mental health organizations, military bases, and veteran advocates. Fundraising efforts are ongoing, including the creation of commemorative challenge coins and pins to raise awareness and financial support for the mission.

**Josephine Keller,**  
**2nd Vice Commander,**  
**AMVETS Dept. CA**

On the legislative front, AMVETS California continues to advocate for policies that benefit veterans and their families. The Department is supporting Assembly Bill 81, which directs the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to conduct a study on female veterans' mental health challenges, with findings expected in July 2025. The Department has also monitored the updates regarding VA disability benefits, particularly concerning Project 2025, which aims to streamline the claims process but raises concerns about potential reductions in benefits and changes to the VA's Schedule for Rating Disabilities. The recent Supreme Court decision in *Rudisill vs. McDonough* has provided new opportunities for veterans who have served multiple periods of service, allowing them to qualify for up to 48 months of GI Bill benefits.

AMVETS California is also advocating for AB 88, which ensures that military dependents stationed outside of California remain eligible for Cal Grants and Middle-Class Scholarship Programs. Additionally, AMVETS is supporting AB 53, which seeks to provide a state tax exemption for military retirement pay, and Senate Bill 23, which would eliminate property taxes for 100% disabled veterans and their surviving spouses between 2025 and 2035. Another major legislative effort supported by AMVETS is Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5 (ACA 5), which aims to reform property tax exemptions for veterans by allowing homeowners' exemptions to be stacked with disabled veterans' exemptions, thus providing greater financial relief.

# Report of Ronald Robinson, NEC Department of California (*continued*)

## National District VI

**Mike Salenga,  
3rd Vice Commander,  
AMVETS Dept. CA**

Since assuming leadership, AMVETS California has remained actively engaged in numerous veteran-focused initiatives and events across the state. In July 2024, leadership participated in officer installations at Post 1947, attended the Fourth of July Parade in Redwood City, and conducted a successful Transition Meeting at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Building. In August, AMVETS representatives attended the AMVETS National Convention in Springfield, Illinois, where they participated in discussions on national policy and veteran advocacy. September saw further community engagement, with installations at San Francisco Golden Gate Post 34, attendance at the VA National Vet Art Show, and participation in local recruitment events. October was marked by the Department's Fall DEC hybrid meeting in Friant, CA, where committees were formed to discuss mission strategies and future projects. The Department also represented AMVETS at the California State Commanders Veterans Council Meeting, ensuring the organization remains at the forefront of state-level veteran advocacy. November brought further engagement through the Veteran Suicide Memorial event in Santa Rosa and support for the Golden State AMVETS ONE Suicide Awareness Tour. In December, AMVETS California's Natural Disaster Relief Committee mobilized to support veterans impacted by Southern California wildfires, coordinating donations and assistance efforts. The Department also hosted a Pre-Super Bowl Party at the Oakland VA Clinic in February, providing veterans with an opportunity for recreation and camaraderie. One of the most significant recent events was the Repatriation Ceremony for WWII Army Air Force Staff Sergeant Yuen Hop, who was killed in action and whose remains were finally returned home after 80 years. AMVETS leadership was honored to participate in the ceremony and pay tribute to his sacrifice.

**Helen Wong,  
Department Commander,  
AMVETS Dept. CA**

The ROTC and JROTC programs continue to be an important part of AMVETS outreach and engagement with young leaders. Over 200 AMVETS ROTC awards are expected to be distributed in 2025, recognizing outstanding cadets for their achievements. The Department has also sponsored two JROTC Air Rifle Matches, two Raider Challenge team events, and one Color Guard Competition, further strengthening AMVETS' relationship with these programs and encouraging future military service among young cadets. AMVETS California remains committed to supporting JROTC programs as a way to introduce younger generations to military service and leadership.

**John Byrum,  
ROTC Chair,  
AMVETS Dept. CA**

The AMVETS Welcome Home Program remains a vital initiative, assisting veterans transitioning from homelessness into stable housing. In January 2025 alone, the program served 26 veterans, adding to a total of 6,882 veterans assisted since its inception in 2012. The program has delivered over 79,000 essential household items, valued at more than \$3 million, to veterans in need. However, there is still a waitlist of 53 veterans awaiting assistance across various regions, including Fresno, San Diego, and Los Angeles. The Department continues to encourage donations, particularly for new bedding, pillows, and cookware, which can be purchased through online registries or donated directly. AMVETS remains committed to expanding the reach of the Welcome Home Program to ensure that no veteran is left without the support they deserve.

**AMVETS Welcome Home Program Manager,  
Karina Guzman Program Manager,  
AMVETS Dept. of California Service Foundation**

The AMVETS Department of California remains steadfast in its mission to serve veterans and their families. Through its extensive programs, legislative advocacy, and dedicated leadership, AMVETS continues to make a meaningful impact in the lives of



## **Report of Ronald Robinson, NEC Department of California (*continued*)**

## **National District VI**

those who have served. The Department is committed to increasing membership engagement, expanding its suicide prevention efforts, and advocating for policies that benefit veterans across California. With ongoing efforts in recruitment, legislative support, and veteran assistance programs, AMVETS California stands firm in its promise to leave no veteran behind.

Respectfully submitted,

**Ron Robinson,  
National Executive Committeeman (NEC),  
AMVETS Dept. CA**





# Report of Steve Bird, NEC Department of Washington

# National District VI

## Membership

Department Membership: 3178 Continued discussions to recreate a department Service Office.

## Programs

Spreadsheets have been obtained for JROTC and ROTC Programs have been received and will be updated and submitted to responsible Posts in the department. The department provides Medals, certificates for programs In Washington, Idaho and Western Montana. Where possible AMVETS representatives attend the award ceremonies

## Legislative

Gerald Cummins AMVETS Member from Jonathon M. Wainwright Post #1111 Walla Walla, WA. Represent AMVETS on the WA. State Governor's. Mr. Charles Wharton represents AMVETS on the Washington State Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC). The VLC discusses the individual Bills during meetings, votes on them and speaks "collectively" to the Legislators through emails to Committee Members, phone calls to Aides and personal testimony on the record during Legislative Committee Hearings.

## Service

No changes have occurred regarding the AMVETS Department of Washington Service Department. The Service Department has closed pending new hires. Since that time the Department has established a new IRS - EIN number and has incorporated with the State of WA. If new VSO's are hired then a new contract with Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs will be negotiated. The decision to fully invest in the continuation of a Service Department will be considered at this year's Spring DEC and the subsequent Department Convention

## Other

Washington State Legislative Agenda as of 1-31-2025  
Bill Number Title Sponsor (Combined) Status Bill  
Summary Hearing Dates

HB 1016 Veterans/employer incentives (Abbarno)  
H Finance Providing employer tax incentives for the

support of veterans and military families. Feb 4, 2025  
Scheduled for public hearing in the House Finance at  
8:00 AM

HB 1021 Military families/education (Shavers) H  
Education Promoting educational stability for children  
of military families.

SHB 1022 Homes for heroes program HOUS (Connors)  
H Cap Budget SHB: Creates a down payment and  
closing cost assistance program for people who work  
in targeted professions and meet certain income  
requirements. (Adds paraeducators & clarifies child  
care prof eligibility)

HB 1050 Naval Academy license plates (Shavers) H  
Transportation

HB 1073 National guard retention (Leavitt) H  
Approps HB: Creates a Washington National Guard  
retention program. Directs the Adjutant General to  
study retention needs, determine eligibility criteria,  
and determine the amount and schedule of retention  
bonuses. Requires the Military Department to report  
on retention needs and recommendations every three  
years.

SHB 1102 Veteran support and services TEDV  
(Shavers) H Approps SHB: Requires the Washington  
Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) to provide  
information to recently discharged veterans about  
veterans benefits, services, and available resources.  
Expands county eligibility for the WDVA's Veterans  
Service Officer Program (Program) to counties where  
the percentage of veterans receiving benefits is below  
the national average. Prioritizes counties with the  
lowest percentage of veterans receiving benefits for the  
Program. Requires the WDVA to provide reports every  
two years including county-specific information about  
the number of resident veterans and services available.  
(SHB removes reference to VSO fund) January 29,  
2025 Scheduled for public hearing in the House  
Appropriations

HB 1106 Disabled veterans/prop. tax (Barnard) H

Report of Steve Bird, NEC  
Department of Washington (*continued*)

National District VI

Finance Recognizing the tremendous sacrifices made by our military veterans by phasing down the disability rating requirements to ensure more disabled veterans are eligible for property tax relief. Feb 4, 2025 Scheduled for public hearing in the House Finance at 8:00 AM

SHB 1161 Veteran employability PEW(Ryu) H Approps SHB: Creates the Veteran Employability Training and Career Advancement for Reentry Program to assist justice-involved veterans with civilian life. (SHB adds ESD to the bill.)

HB 1165 Property tax exemptions (Shavers) H Finance Expanding access to property tax exemptions by increasing each median income category by 5% beginning in 2027. Feb 4, 2025 Scheduled for public hearing in the House Finance at 8:00 AM

HB 1179 Property tax value freeze (Volz) H Finance Proving a property tax valuation freeze for seniors and disabled veterans.

HB 1245 Business development (Couture) H Tech, Econ Dev HB: Establishes the office of entrepreneurship within the Dept of Commerce and allows cooperation with the Dept of Veterans Affairs and others to improve access for statistically underrepresented demographic segments and geographic areas of the state (including VOBs) and others to state contracts. Jan 22, 2025 Scheduled for public hearing in the House Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans

HB 1335 Military spouse employment (Richards) H Labor & Workpl Amends existing law regarding discrimination to include military spouses. Feb 7, 2025 Scheduled for executive hearing in the House Labor & Workplace Standards at 10:30 AM

HB 1541 Veterans affairs adv. comm. (Abell) H Tech, Econ Dev (companion to SB 5338) Allows one appointment to the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) to a Veteran who is a member of a Native American Tribe recognized in WA State and one appointment to a National Guard Representative who can be either a current National Guard Member

or a Veteran of the NG. Retains the requirement for a VAAC Liaison to be appointed to represent individual State Veterans Homes and removes language referring to appointing a Resident of the Soldiers Home and Veterans Home. Codifies the two Homes positions as At Large positions. Feb 4, 2025 Scheduled for executive hearing in the House Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans at 10:30 AM



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*Riders President, Finance Officer, Inspector General,  
VAWS Representative, and Service Director reports not received by deadline*



## Report of Horace Johnson, National Commander

Members of the AMVETS National Executive Committee,

Six months into my year as National Commander, and I am still in awe at the level of Dignity, Respect, and Honor I have received from everyone I've encountered since being elected National Commander. Thank you all for allowing me to be the face of AMVETS, 2024 through 2025.

The responsibilities are astronomical. When officers at this level are successful it's because he/she has been through a lot of sleepless nights, difficult meetings, debates, and discussions. I deal with all types of necessary discussions; good, bad, and indifferent; having to make decisions that based on what's the best for the many even if my decisions do not appeal to the Majority. The Majority can overrule, and that is the good part. Leadership in this Organization is unique because at every level, you are not the sole Leader. You are the spokesperson for a group of people, the checks and balances.

I'm sure most already heard the reason we are unable to have our NEC at our new National Headquarters here in Washington, PA, is mostly because we couldn't get the elevator installed in time. We have a lot of Members who need that elevator (including me). The elevator needs a larger amount of power to operate than what is running to the building, which requires the city, utility company, and even political powers to get together. They actually have to get a newer transformer. Oh! By the way, that involves more money, which is always the bottom line. We are headed over budget; not much we can do about it now. Since this is in Pennsylvania, the winter weather slowed us down. The good news is that our Staff is still making this thing a reality.

I'm sure some folks are not fond of this little know fact, but we are about to go back to working in-office five days a week at AMVETS and AMVETS Service Foundation. I am not bragging, but that is going to happen.

I had the opportunity to go to the National District III meeting lately in Port Royal, South Carolina,

and Department of Florida's Meeting/National Commander's Florida tour, which was different, because, although I have been on the National Commander's tour as the host, this was the first time I have been on the tour as the National Commander: quite different.

I testified at a special joint hearing in Congress before the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and the U.S. House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee on February 25. This is one of the AMVETS National Commander's most important tasks as Commander. Normally we do this in conjunction with our Legislative Action Week, and most of the NEC is present, but we cannot control Congressional scheduling, and it just didn't align this year. I stepped up to the plate and did my best to make AMVETS proud.

I have some personal health issues, which Toni and I are working through, but I'm still looking forward to seeing all your enthusiastic, energetic faces.

Always Yours in Service,

Horace Johnson,  
AMVETS National Commander



# Report of Cindy Rice, AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary National President

AMVETS National Commander Johnson, National Officer, Past National Commanders, Members and Guests.

Welcome to the Spring NEC. I am honored and humbled to be serving as AMVETS National LADIES Auxiliary President for the year 2024-2025. I have many mentors who have helped me through the years from department to national. Their insight and knowledge are so valuable and much appreciated.

My theme this year is “Together We Can”, stop Diabetes. It takes a TEAM to make things happen and there is no I in TEAM. A leader is only as good as the officers she has surrounding her and supporting her. I have an amazing team this year. Let’s all work together this year as a “**Team**” because “**Together We Can**” accomplish our goals. **Together We Can** communicate. **Together We Can** thank each other.

My project this year is the “AMVETS Diabetes Research Institute “at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. I chose this project because it speaks to my heart, over half my family has been diagnosed with this prevalent disease. Many of you may know someone afflicted with this disease: such as a friend, a family member or an or an acquaintance. You yourself may already have been diagnosed with it. There are several types of Diabetes; Type 1, Type 2, Prediabetes and Gestational Diabetes. Diabetes is a growing global problem. According to the World Health Organization between 1980 and 2014, the number of people with diabetes around the world rose from 108 million to 422 million. Diabetes can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, strokes or even amputations. However, both the illness and its effects can be managed through diet, treatment, and regular screenings. The sooner you identify the problem, the sooner you can do something about it.

By increasing awareness about diabetes, we can empower individuals to make healthy choices and take steps towards preventing and managing this chronic illness. “**TOGETHER WE CAN**” make a difference in the fight against diabetes and improve the overall health and well-being of our community.

Since December I have traveled to Maryland for Jim King’s celebration of life, the Thrift store Christmas Party, to the Departments of North Carolina and back to Ohio. I will be traveling to the Department of Pennsylvania then on to DC for Law and on to Washington, Pennsylvania for the NEC. At the end of the month, I will be traveling to Missouri. May 3rd. will be my testimonial dinner at post 22 in Vermilion, Ohio. All are welcome. I will be distributing information at spring NEC.

Commander Johnson, I wish you a very constructive, informative and successful NEC. I look forward to seeing you and the members at Spring NEC.

President Cindy Rice  
AMVETS National Ladies Auxiliary



## **Report of Owen Jackson, National Sons of AMVETS Commander**

Commander Johnson, National Officers, and Members  
of the AMVETS NEC;

Greetings from the Sons of AMVETS! I hope that everyone is doing well and having a successful beginning to the year of Serving Our Veterans!

The National Sons and I would like to welcome you to AMVETS Spring NEC meeting. Please take what you've learned this weekend back to your posts and states so that they are aware of what the AMVETS are doing for the Organization.

I want to thank Commander Johnson and A.J. John for joining our e-board meeting in January at Post 26 in Florida. We had a good meeting.

My Commander's Project this year is the AMVETS Charities Family Service Center. The Service Center will provide transition housing, and an array of important services, to Veterans and their families who are experiencing, or in danger of, homelessness.

My testimonial will be July 26th in Dayton, Ohio area – more details to follow.

In closing, have a safe trip home and I will see you in Greensboro. I'm looking forward to continuing working with your National Leadership and cannot wait to see everyone during LAW Week and Spring NEC.

Yours in Service,

Owen Jackson  
National Commander  
Sons of AMVETS



## Report of PNC Harold Chapman, National Service Foundation President

Commander Johnson and members of the AMVETS National Executive Committee,

The Foundation is at an exciting stage in our long-term recovery plan. Not only are we back on stable ground financially, growing again, we are on the cusp of dramatically increasing the amount and level of services provided to our fellow veterans, especially to those in dire need of a hand up.

Through extremely tight restrictions on spending, we completely stopped the bleeding. We have paid off our debts. Now every penny spent on development is generating strong returns on our investments. We are now in the important phase of building adequate savings so that we can comfortably operate without fear of ever again getting close to going under.

We deeply appreciate the patience and understanding of the several Departments that have received much smaller grants than normal as we work through these rough times. We know that is making life even more difficult in your states. Please know we are working hard to get things right so we can soon return to strongly supporting your efforts at the levels you need. Most importantly, once we are “back,” you will be able to rely on a strong NSF for the long-term.

Bringing our direct mail donation solicitations continues to be a smashing success, increasing revenue while simultaneously lowering the costs we were paying to mail houses and consulting agencies. Our donor base is once again loyal and growing.

We have three new thrift stores opening this year, and our team is seeking locations for four more in the near future. With the better than expected success of our newest store, in Erie, PA, we are focused on growing our presence in western Pennsylvania before moving into other states. This growth is vital to the long-term success of the NSF.

Our National Service Department continues reaching new levels of services delivered nationwide under the new model, working closely with Departments’, states’,

Posts’, and counties’ service officers. We still have a lot of growth planned and needed, but we are on the proper course.

As part of our efforts to diversify our contribution base, the most exciting, inspiring news I have to share is that we have submitted our first-ever federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Labor for a \$9M, 3-year grant for the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program (HVRP). We are very hopeful that we will be successful in getting this grant approved. This would allow our staff to launch a new program in multiple states, directly assisting homeless veterans with critical needs. If funding is approved, these programs will begin this summer!

Our entire team is working together around the clock to apply for U.S. Department of Labor grants in Phoenix, Arizona: Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Seattle and Tacoma, Washington. These areas were selected because each has a high number of veterans in need of the services we will be offering and an inadequate number of organizations there offering these services, based on reliable Department of Labor data. The plan is to establish our program in these locations throughout 2025 and then begin setting up the program in another set of locations throughout the United States each year after, averaging about five new service areas per year.

The services we will provide under the AMVETS banner will be aimed at veterans experiencing unemployment, homelessness, disabilities, recent incarceration, and the challenges that come with being single parents of young children. Several AMVETS NSF staff members will be hired in each approved area this summer to deliver these services in conjunction with our staff at headquarters and in the National Capital Region Office.

The NSF executive team is working in lockstep with the National Programs Department and its AMVETS Career Center to build this with NSF’s newest hire (and NSF’s first hire in PA), Mr. Lewis Arnette. Lewis is a U.S. Navy veteran and comes to us with a long history of winning these competitive grants and building out



## Report of PNC Harold Chapman, National Service Foundation President (*continued*)

these programs to help veterans in need and their families. Lewis is here this week with us. I encourage you to introduce yourself.

This is the path forward, leveraging grants to serve our fellow veterans and using the funds raised through our growing thrift stores operation to cover the administrative costs of running a major charity and to aide our Departments. Brighter days are on the horizon.

That completes my report. I move for its adoption at the proper time.







# Report of Paul Shipley

## National First Vice Commander

My fellow AMVETS,

It has been a busy time in membership. We are working on some exciting projects to really define the way our members can serve veterans in this nation, their state, and local communities. These projects will translate into more opportunities for you as AMVETS to increase and solidify your membership.

I outlined in my previous report in December some of the goals that I have for the membership department this year. I want to clarify and define some of the concrete things we have done and are doing this year.

1. Modernize and streamline the membership process.
  - We are looking at modernizing the membership card using newer, more cost-effective materials while not sacrificing the quality of materials. This will reduce the costs of mailing cards to the annual members which is a burden to our posts. It will reduce the production costs which will allow for more resources to be committed to direct membership projects.
  - We are working to allow for auto renewal for annual members within the membership management program. Giving more convenience to our members and posts.
  
2. Communication.
  - We have been having online meetings with Department 1st vice commanders and other interested parties on a regular basis. We will continue through the end of my term as NF1VC.
  - We have updated the brochure for posts to handout with new images honoring our history and representing what our organization looks like today.
  
3. Incentive to recruiters.
  - This years incentive program is as follows:
    - i. 5 members: receive a Gold Challenge Coin and Certificate of recognition.
    - ii. 10 members: receive an AMVETS Recruiter t shirt
    - iii. 25 members: receive an AMVETS Recruiter flex fit ballcap

- iv. 35+ members: receive an AMVETS Recruiter Winter Coat with custom embroidery.

I am humbled and honored to be your National First Vice Commander. I am happy to speak with anyone at any time to make this organization improve.

Best,

Paul Shipley,  
AMVETS National First Vice Commander



## Report of Sandy Vorhies, National Second Vice Commander

Commander Johnson and fellow AMVETS,

I want to thank the National Programs Team, Warren Cox, Colondra Etheredge and our newest team member Kathleen Ford for the continued support and commitment to our National Programs.

Programs training part 2 which covered entering reporting information and updating your profile was held on February 12, 2025. This training was open to all 2nd vice commanders and/or programs managers. Colondra Etheredge will also be sending out the training PowerPoints so that there can be a tool to fall back on and to train members in the reporting process.

One concern has been brought to the programs team's attention, and I did address this in the beginning of the February 12, 2025, training session. The concern is "Does the AMVETS report the Auxiliary programs?" This is very simple, No. The AMVETS program reporting is to only have what the veterans are doing. Each supporting group of the AMVETS, Auxiliary, Sons, Juniors, Sad Sacks and Riders report within their reporting period. If you should have any questions regarding this, please contact me or a programs team member and we will be happy to answer your questions or concerns.

The programs department is working with the Ladies Auxiliary to establish an agenda/program for the Founding Forward Program. There have been several zoom meetings to establish the changes and our additions that we would like to have for the Founding Forward Program and we have also met via zoom with the Founding Forward leadership. This is an ongoing process and as soon as the finished agenda and changes have been agreed upon, we will reach out as soon as possible.

There is one request, there is much time-consuming work with the processing of the winners for the Founding Forward program, and for this reason we are asking that as soon as you have the winners of your Americanism Essays that you forward the winners information and essays to National for processing.

We are also requesting that each Department have a 9th or 10th student to go to the Founding Forward program. The number of students has dropped, and our goal is to build the program back up. Please keep in mind that a Department can pay for additional students.

The programs team is working on the program "Behind the Walls". We have correctional posts within Indiana, Oklahoma, and Ohio and we are having much success with them.

Currently, we are in the beginning stages of the program's development. process of putting together a packet and letter that can be used for starting up a correctional post. We are in the beginning stages of Behind the Walls program and further updates will be provided as progress is being made. As we know but let me state a reminder that Let no man or women be left behind.

Colondra has put together the reporting data which you will find in her report. Please look at the percentages of the posts and the departments that are reporting.

Keep in mind the reporting periods. There is a one-week grace period after the close of the reporting period to enter your program data. I strongly suggest that you do not wait to report the programs but report the programs in a timely fashion.

The reporting periods are:

- January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025 – This is the second reporting period for 2025
- July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025 – This is the first reporting period for 2025.

Commander Johnson, this is my report, and I ask that my report be adopted at the proper time.

With high regard,

Sandy Vorhies  
National Second Vice Commander  
AMVETS (American Veterans)



## Report of Chris Studebaker National Third Vice Commander

### The 119th Congress sets the pace early...

Following an eventful close to the year, the 119th Congress is geared up and ready to take on key policy objectives under newly inaugurated President Donald Trump. With Republicans now holding both chambers of Congress and the White House, the stage is set for a policy-heavy start to 2025. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are pushing forward with bill introductions and navigating budget reconciliation challenges—all while the countdown to a potential government shutdown on March 14 looms.

As always, our legislative team is in the thick of it in Washington, DC. Justin Brown, Danielle Forand, and the rest of the team were thrilled to open a new office just a block from the Capitol last fall. It has quickly become a go-to hub for Hill staffers, VSO partners, and even members of Congress to gather and discuss issues vital to the veteran community.

AMVETS has been actively engaging with partners on our legislative priorities for the new year and new Congress. We've already hit the ground running in endorsing bills that align with our mission, and we're optimistic about getting as many across the finish line as possible. The momentum we built last Congress continues to drive us, and we look forward to working alongside our grassroots network to achieve even greater impact over the next two years. Stay tuned for updates on these efforts.

Legislative Advocacy Week (LAW) is fast approaching, and we are eager to see AMVETS members take to the Hill to advocate for servicemembers, veterans, survivors, and their families. If you can't make it to DC this March, don't worry—there are plenty of ways to engage with your representatives through our online Legislative Action Center. Be sure to check in regularly for updates on active grassroots campaigns, our legislative priorities, and our nationally endorsed bills. Additionally, if you want to stay informed on our efforts throughout the year, please subscribe to our weekly Legislative Update newsletter. Let us know if you need assistance accessing these valuable resources.

AMVETS remains steadfast in our commitment to working with lawmakers, fellow VSOs, and our members to keep veterans' issues at the forefront of national policy discussions. The passage of the VSO Equal Tax Treatment Act last year was a hard-fought victory, and we're confident that more wins are on the horizon. Our team is incredibly passionate about this work; we look forward to engaging with all of you throughout the 119th Congress. Thank you for your continued support.

With high regard,

Chris Studebaker,  
AMVETS National Third Vice Commander



## Report of Frederick L. Bates, National Judge Advocate

National Commander Johnson and members of the NEC and distinguished Guests. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your National Judge Advocate.

I have held the position of National Judge Advocate for 7 months and have enjoyed the job immensely. As your JA, my job is to advise the National Commander and the National Executive Committee on the construction and interpretation of the National Constitution and By Laws, and other duties that fall under the scope of my office. My job is not to run local Post or Department. I have received numerous calls on incidents at a post level. If it is an issue or interpretation of the National CBL that is ok. It is not my job to run or tell you how to run your post. If you have issues with your post, work it out at the post level first, then if they have not corrected your issue, then bring it up to your department, before contacting me. It is not that I do not want to help you, but we all need to use the chain of command moving forward. If you need to contact me my email address is fbates3@bellsouth.net and my cell number is 808-284-0973. If I do not answer, please leave me a message and I will get back with you. Please pass this information on to your department and posts.

Commander, this concludes my report, and I move for its adoption at the proper time.



# Report of Rigley K. Jackson National Chaplain

From 2024 to present date February 2025, I've been working to learn more about our report program and how the system work so I can be at my best for everyone. It has been an honor to support families who have lost loved ones. Last year I attended two service for PNC James "Jim" King, in Springfield MO, and Hollywood Maryland. As Chaplain I have been busy visiting the sick at VA Hospital in DC, sent our many get well cards and bereavement cards as well as attending memorial services on line. Attended last NEC meeting by zoom in December 2024.

## Upcoming Events

I plan to attend Commander Horace Johnson's Testimony on Capitol Hill. Also plan to make NEC, March 2025 in PA.

## Programs

I asked District Chaplain and Department Chaplains to Continue used reporting system.

## Service

According to the 2023-2024 report I seen AMVETS has lost a lot of members. As we move forward please find comfort in knowing that I am available to assist our AMVETS families the best way I can. My goal will always be to work and provide special prayers for all our veterans and there families during their time of grief and mourning.

Please don't hesitate to reach out. God loves you and so do I.

Be blessed!



## Report of Joseph Chenelly, National Executive Director

National Commander Johnson, National Officers, members of the National Executive Committee, and fellow AMVETS:

With the first half of the fiscal year already in the books, AMVETS National Headquarters is as busy and working as hard as ever. There is a whole lot of moving parts right now for every aspect of your NHQ and National Service Foundation.

I'm going to start by highlighting another report in this NEC book. Please be sure to read PNC Chapman's report on behalf the AMVETS NSF. He outlines our joint efforts to create millions of dollars of new services to be offered this year in four states. I hope you get as excited about that as I am.

With so much going on, my report to you could go one for dozens of pages, so I am going to focus on two primary subjects:

1. The cuts occurring in the VA
2. Our new NHQ building

The new administration in the White House has everyone in D.C. jumping right now. We hear the serious concerns and questions coming in everyday from members everywhere. While we are doing our best to answer everyone, we don't have many answers, yet.

Unknown specifics lead to speculation and misinformation. The result is a lot of fear in the veterans community. That's harmful. I asked the new VA Secretary Doug Collins to increase his visibility in answering questions, explaining what's happening, what's to come, and why this all this is happening. He is now making efforts to do that. We need more.

The VA let go of about 1,000 employees in President Trump's first month. About 500 of them were hired back quickly after. We are told none of them were medical providers or in "mission critical" positions. There were administrative support staff in the Crisis Hotline offices who were dismissed, but they were among those rehired shortly after. It is disturbing that people were

fired by mistake, but it is encouraging to see the VA apparently was willing and able to fix its mistakes.

The VA is now working with DOGE to identify another 70,000 VA employees (about 15% of the VA workforce) to cut by the end of this summer with the goal of returning the VA to 2019 staffing levels. The big problem with that is the PACT Act and Dole ACT didn't exist in 2019, meaning there were a lot less veterans in the VA system and less services offered at that time. We are struggling to reconcile that revelation with Secretary Collins' promise that these cuts won't harm veterans benefits or access to care. It is hard to imagine how that could be.

The VA is not the only federal agency being slashed, but of course it is the one on which we primarily focus. These cuts are being done without Congressional approval, but I know the VA staff is working with the chairs and some members of the Senate and House committees on veterans affairs. This began with Congress largely in the dark, but that has changed. We continue telling Congress they must fulfill their Constitutional oversight responsibilities.

National Commander Johnson and our legislative team did a fantastic job expressing that message and AMVETS' concerns to Congress in February, and I know those walking the halls on Capitol Hill this week will do great work in the same vein.

By the time you read this, I will have met privately again with VA Secretary Collins in D.C. to hear his points of view and to express ours. His message has been these cuts are needed to eliminate waste, increase efficiency, and redirect funds to ensure benefits remain unchanged and the to improve delivery of services. Our answer to that line of thinking has long been that if the VA needs more money to keep its promises, Congress must approve it. But this administration says it won't ask for additional funding.

Our concerns begin and end with veterans, dependents, and survivors receiving what they earned. If these staffing cuts cause the VA to be unable to provide what is needed in acceptable timeframes, veterans are going



## Report of Joseph Chenelly, National Executive Director (*continued*)

to have a big problem. If, heaven forbid, that becomes the case, we will become a big problem for those making these decisions now.

I will be pressing the administration to be more collaborative with AMVETS and the other VSOs than we've seen over the past five years. It is imperative that Secretary Collins works closely with us as they move forward, using our connection to everyday veterans.

We are close to becoming operational at the new national headquarters building here in "WashPA." It was very disappointing that we could not get the building ready in time to host this week's meetings in our new place, but that wasn't because of lack of effort or funds. Next year's Spring NEC will certainly be in our new building.

Southwestern Pennsylvania doesn't typically see harsh winters. When our general contractor presented timelines many months ago, they took into account the average weather patterns for the past five years. As luck would have it, WashPA just experienced its snowiest, coldest winter in more than 10 years. That forced lengthy delays in important parts of the project, including roofing and most everything that requires work outside.

The biggest, most expensive challenge in the remodel is installing an elevator. The elevator was originally planned for the second phase of the construction. As engineers worked through the project, it became apparent that moving the elevator install into the first phase was the most economical and smartest move. We then discovered the building was not connected to three-phase power, which is required to run the elevator. Adding that electricity also allows us to go with more efficient air handling units. Three-phase is not currently on our road, so we entered into the long process of working with the area's electric company and the public utilities bureaucracy. New transformers and poles are being placed, and new lines will be run in the coming weeks.

Shifting the elevator work into the first phase has budget implications. With that move, as the NHQ

Construction Committee will report during this NEC meeting, costs are now projected to exceed the budget by the cost of the elevator. To make this possible, funds earmarked for the second phase need to be shifted into the first phase. A county-level grant is the primary funding source for the second phase, which includes the beginning of AMVETS National Memorial Park.

The NHQ Construction Committee's chair and members have done an amazing job, staying on top of this massive task, providing top-notch insight and oversight every day. I am grateful for each of them.

As promised, we will maintain a small footprint in the Washington, D.C., area to ensure we keep our strong influence there. The temporary NHQ office in Hyattsville, MD, which is owned by AMVETS NSF, will be closed once the move to PA is complete this spring. NSF acquired new office space in Rockville, MD, and is upfitting it to become the AMVETS National Capital Region Office in June.

Like the American Legion, VFW, and DAV, AMVETS will finally have our national headquarters away from expensive D.C. plus a smaller office in the D.C. area for advocacy. At each step of this evolution, we have reduced costs and improved services.

Our new NHQ building's address is 267 North Avenue, Washington, PA 15301. Access to the building this week is restricted because it is an active construction zone. Please do not try to enter without coordinating beforehand. We will make walking tour opportunities for those who wish to see it this week. A webpage with updated information is available at [www.amvets.org/NHQ](http://www.amvets.org/NHQ).

Also just a few miles away is the future AMVETS Charities Family Services Center. Likewise, we will facilitate tours for those interested this weekend. The latest info on this monumental project can be found at [www.amvets.org/familyservicecenter](http://www.amvets.org/familyservicecenter).

In May, we will hold our fifth annual Rolling to Remember Demonstration Ride in D.C. over Memorial Day weekend. We would love to have you there. We will





## Report of Joseph Chenelly, National Executive Director (*continued*)

hold a vigil at the Vietnam War Veterans Memorial the night of May 23, and the big ride begins at the Pentagon on May 25. We are now working to a rally immediately after the ride on The Ellipse just outside the White House. President Trump has expressed his interest and is expected to addressing our rally in person. We need a lot of volunteers to pull this off. You do not need to ride a motorcycle to take part and make a difference.  
[www.rollingtoremember.com](http://www.rollingtoremember.com).

Each year a nationally-televised Veterans Day ceremony is held at Arlington National Cemetery. This year is AMVETS' turn to be the host org, an opportunity that comes around once every 27 years. Our national commander will address the ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns, and AMVETS will host a reception at Arlington that afternoon. It would be so great to see you there.

### Key dates for the 2025 Membership Year:

- May 23-25 – Rolling to Remember (Washington, DC)
- July 19 – National Finance Committee Budget Meeting & National Commander Johnson's Testimonial (Orlando, FL)
- August 19-23 – AMVETS 79th National Convention (Greensboro, NC)
- November 11 – National Veterans Day ceremony (Arlington, VA)

This concludes my report, and I move for its acceptance at the appropriate time.





# Report of Warren Cox, National Membership Director

National Commander Johnson, National Officers, NEC Members, Executive Director, AMVETS Family:

Membership would first like to thank 1st Vice Commander Paul Shipley who continues to work towards the betterment of the organization.

Thank you all for the privilege of serving as your National Membership Director, it is with great honor and passion that I as well as the Staff (Mrs. Carolyn and Mrs. Linda) serve you. The team is cohesive, dedicated, and motivated to assist you. Please continue to welcome our first employee at HQ Washington PA Katie Ford. Katie is a proud ARMY spouse who prides herself in serving veterans and her community. She will work in a dual administrative position for both Membership and Programs. Please welcome her at [kford@amvets.org](mailto:kford@amvets.org)

Membership's Mission is unwavering and that is to provide quality service with excellence and professionalism resulting in expedited sound responses to all needs.

Great news! We have seen recent uptick in Membership with over 3000 New Joins this year. Life Membership is currently 80%, our focus and yours is to encourage new members to enroll under Annual Membership, this in return would increase revenue and stability.

### Life Dues Reminder

When converting members from Annual to Life, please let the Membership Team know the members' age. Based off the new Life Member dues increases they will be billed according to their age. See the Life Dues amount below. They are now available online.

- 55 years of age and under \$500.00
- 56 to 65 years of age \$400.00
- 66 years of age and older \$300.00

### Annual Member Cards/Initiative

We are very excited that for the first time all Annual Member Cards were preprinted and available at the Convention for Dept Leaders to take home and distribute to Posts. This eliminated delays with

members receiving cards and money savings due to not having to complete multiple mailings. Feedback from Members (you) has been very positive, we will continue this practice moving forward.

Replacing the plastic Annual Membership Cards, we are now in early discussions to change our hard plastic annual members cards to a more updated cost-effective card similar to other VSOs that will be presented ASAP for your approval, our goal is to cut costs while maintaining quality.

### Initiatives

Recruit 5 Membership Drive is online!!!

Recruiters will receive a Gold Challenge Coin and Certificate of recognition.

Please forward, recruiting initiatives, photos of Post events, etc. for our social media to [membersupport@amvets.org](mailto:membersupport@amvets.org). This will also be sent to Department Leadership to share with their struggling Posts. Your ideas can be adopted in one area or another.

### Virtual meetings with National 1st Vice commander Paul Shipley

Thank you, Department Leaders for attending both virtual roundtables. These meetings are to share ideas and to address your concerns and stay on top of any, and all situations. Please be on the lookout for our next meeting in June.

National 1st Vice Paul Shipley is committed to increasing communication between Dept and National, please see his report for more details.

### Dues Reminders

We need all leaders to reach out to their people that have yet to renew. Responses have been very positive. Our members are renewing in huge numbers let's keep this momentum going.

Reminders have been sent via mail and hardcopy to our members and we are happy to report dues are being paid in record numbers.

# Report of Warren Cox, National Membership Director (continued)

Second, Dues hardcopy reminders have been mailed to ALL 2024 members that have not renewed yet. They started hitting mailboxes in early February.

This year we've sent dues reminders to our new vendor, and this has cut our costs in half.

## New Brochures

Brochures/Applications have been updated! We have pictures highlighting current events, conflicts and our Proud Female Veterans!



### Our History

When our troops returned home at the end of WWII, many used their newly earned GI Bill benefits to attend college. Veterans found they were comfortable with other veterans on campus because of their similar experiences, leading them to form veterans' clubs. These veterans' clubs became active in shaping American policy, culminating in President Harry Truman's signing of Public Law 216 that granted a Congressional Charter to AMVETS on July 23, 1947.



### Who We Are

Representing 16 million veterans and their families, AMVETS is one of America's leading veteran service organizations. Today's AMVETS is about assisting veterans in accessing their benefits, supporting their healing journey, and advocating for their well-being. Membership in AMVETS is open to anyone who is currently serving, or who has honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the National Guard & Reserves. We look forward to welcoming you to the AMVETS family.



Scan to join  
AMVETS



3311 Hubbard Road  
Hyattsville, Maryland 20785  
(877) 726-8387  
amvets@amvets.org  
www.amvets.org



## Revalidations

Online Revalidations have improved; however, we still receive paper revals mailed. This upcoming year 2025-26 we highly encourage everyone to complete the process online. The online process is much faster and easier than the antiquated manual process. A confirmation is sent immediately to the submitter and National when the online process has been completed. Let's continue to save the trees and the cost of mailing.

Make sure your 990s and Insurances are up to date. This is mandatory.

## Recruiting

Many Departments and Posts have stepped up their recruiting efforts and have greatly improved their membership.

**\*RECRUITING IS EVERYONES' (AMVETS WIDE) RESPONSIBILITY!**

1st Vices it is YOUR responsibility to recruit, maintain and retain your members not National.

Post-level recruiting events should take place at least four times a year.

To receive your copy of the new brochures/applications email [membersupport@amvets.org](mailto:membersupport@amvets.org).

**\*Hearts and Minds - RED – don't just Remember them!**

We have addresses to some of our men and woman deployed now. Send care packages and literature so AMVETS is the first VSO they remember when they return home.

**\*MALs – Reach out to all of those in your zip code and invite them to join. Most states have more MAL than active post members.**

## Member Owned Business

We will highlight your Veteran owned business on our website for free advertisement. Send details to [membersupport@amvets.org](mailto:membersupport@amvets.org).

**AMVETS Charities Family Services Center**  
Renovations have begun, and once open this center will provide transition housing and an array of important services to Veterans and their families who are experiencing or in danger of homelessness.

**Scholarships**  
AMVETS proudly offers more than thirty scholarships every year to active duty service members and veterans, as well as to children, grand children and/or spouses of veterans.

**Warrior Transition Workshops**

- Veterans learn how to re-establish connections with their friends and families
- Integrates a peer-to-peer approach
- Reduces the impact of combat trauma
- Demonstrates statistically significant outcomes in reduction of sleep disturbance, anger, anxiety, and social isolation

By joining AMVETS, you will share a commitment with others who think like you. You'll also share the pride that comes from belonging to an organization devoted to helping veterans and improving the quality of life for this nation's citizens.

To learn more about AMVETS, the specific member benefits we offer and local posts, call us toll free:  
**(877) 726-8387**  
or visit our website at  
[www.amvets.org](http://www.amvets.org)

## Programs Report

Please see National 2nd Vice Vorhies and Manager Colondra Etherege report.



## **Report of Warren Cox, National Membership Director (*continued*)**

Again, I am honored and fully committed to you all and the mission at hand.

Together we will continue to be the best Veterans Service Organization in our country.

We continue to stand on “**Help One Save One.**”

**God Bless America and AMVETS!**

***ALWAYS RED***

Warren

### **Report of Carolyn Taylor-Harrison Assistant to the National Membership Director**

With over twenty years of service to AMVETS National HQ I consider it a privilege to serve in this capacity.

Our mission this year is to strive even harder to educate and train you as we fully transition back into our old data base, and to work more with the Departments/ Post on how important it is to apply monies to the members records ASAP.

**Revalidations:** We are working hard to get the officers to utilize the online revalidation. It is faster and when they are completed online, we do not need any paperwork sent to National.

When it is not completed online, we will have to enter all the information manually from the forms received.

Thank you.  
Carolyn

# Report of Colondra Etheredge, National Programs Report

National Commander Johnson members of the NEC and distinguished guests,

National Programs would like to welcome Katie Ford to our team. Katie was hired on to assist Membership and Programs. Katie realizes that it is a lot to grasp with Programs (I am sure there is a lot to grasp with Membership as well), however; she is taking it one step at a time and dedicating her time into focusing on the task at hand. Thanks, National 2nd Vice Sandy Vorhies and National Director Warren Cox, for the continued support they have given this department.

## Programs Training

Training Part 2: Entering Reporting Data and Updating your Profile was held on February 12, 2025. This training was open for both All Level 2nd Vices/Programs Coordinators. Most of the District and Department 2nd Vices/Programs Coordinators are familiar with the platform, has been very supportive with assisting their post with their challenges with the system. There are still some who need the extra layer of training. National Programs Team is available by virtual appointments only to assist.

We appreciate your patience with this process, Katie and I trained with Springly in December and January. We have the knowledge on how to adjust most of the issue that the members are bring to our attention.

**Americanism Meeting:** February 20, 2025

## Programs Reporting

AMVETS National Reporting Period I July-December 2024 ended. Every Reporting Period there is a one-week (7 days) grace period to upload your Volunteer Hours and Milage. Please take note **on January 7th and July 7th every year** the Reporting Portal will close and start a new Reporting Period. The portal will not be reopened **no exceptions**. This was a challenge as we reopened on January 16th -18th to adjust for the portal closing a day early. If you are having issues with submitting, National provides virtual training at Convention, October, and February annually.

Reporting Period II January-July is now open for Reporting. Portal will close on July 7, 2025. Remember there are two (2) platforms. One for the Members Reporting, can be accessed by the online reporting link at <https://www.amvets.org/submit-reports>. A PowerPoint with step-by-step instructions (including pictures for those are new to computers) can be found online at <https://www.amvets.org/2024materials>.

Department	Post Percentage	Department Percentage
District I	37%	83%
District II	70%	100%
District III	88%	86% Dept. Suspension
District IV	71%	100%
District V	29%	100%
District VI	67%	67%
Unorganized	55%	71%
National	65%	89%

As if January 7, 2025

Period I ended December 31, 2024

## 100% Department Reporting

Alaska	District of Columbia	Missouri
Colorado	Georgia	Nevada
Connecticut	Illinois	Tennessee
Delaware	Mississippi	

National VAVS and Non VAVS Programs valued over \$186 million dollars. See breakdown below:

Category	Volunteers	Value
VAVS	32,069	\$915,235
Remember Me	33,156	\$94,781,794
Americanism	11,117	\$10,318,106
Community Service	20,229	\$77,552,597
Suicide Awareness	120,095	\$183,567,732

See Programs Reporting Category List for Sub-category listing.



# Report of Colondra Etheredge, National Programs Report (*continued*)

## Contests

Gift Card for 2024 Americanism and AADAA winners were mailed out to all Departments in January 2025. Please let us know if you haven't received your cards as we can track the card numbers to locate them.

Americanism Theme 2024-2025 "What does flag protection mean to me?"

AADAA Theme 2024-2025 "Your Future Is Key...Stay Drug Free"

## Founding Forward

### Spirit of America Youth Conference

National (AMVETS and AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary) had an After-Action session in January with Founding Forward Education Team. There were a few suggestions and issues discuss to make adjustment to the program. AMVETS Americanism Chair Jeff Lukens called a meeting for February 20, 2025, to discuss a plan for the November 2025 conference. Full details of the meeting will be emailed to all Americanism Department Coordinators. In the meantime, please send all 1st-3rd Place Americanism Department Winners to National as soon as possible but no later than July 1, 2025. Address:

## VAVS

Department – deadlines are by July 31, 2025. We are working to get the requests updated. We are still awaiting on an updated list of each Department's Representative and Duties.

Next Programs Training: TBA

Topic: TBA

## Report Of Ciara Singletary, M.A.

**AMVETS Chief Veteran Employment Officer  
National Programs Associate**

### AMVETS Career Center 2025 Spring NEC Report

In 2024, the AMVETS Career Center successfully surpassed its goal of placing 650 veterans. Looking ahead, we are excited to continue our partnership with the Call of Duty Endowment in 2025, with an updated

goal of 675 placements. Together, we remain committed to addressing the ongoing challenges of unemployment and underemployment among our nation's veterans.

In light of recent developments, including the Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid executive order and stop-work directives from the U.S. Administration, companies are reassessing their general and administrative (G&A) positions as well as U.S. government-funded project roles. As a result, many organizations have temporarily paused their veteran outreach efforts. However, the Career Center continues to support veterans on leave, connecting them with available government contract opportunities.

### 2025 Progress Report:

As of Quarter 1, 2025, the AMVETS Career Center has successfully placed 73 veterans toward our annual goal of 675 placements. Full-time placements stand at 98%, with 79% of placements being Post 9/11 veterans and 21% women. The top three industries for placement are Information - Information Technology, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Government and Public Administration. The average salary for placements is \$84,000.

**Thank you for having a heart to serve!**



# SPRING NEC LEGISLATIVE REPORT

2025  
119TH CONGRESS



**PREPARED BY**

*Chris Studebaker  
Justin Brown  
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**PREPARED FOR**

*AMVETS  
Membership*



# AMVETS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 119TH CONGRESS

1. Bolster Mental Wellness and Suicide Prevention Efforts in the VA and Armed Forces
2. Ensure the Completion of a Successful and Seamless Electronic Healthcare Record
3. Promote Veteran Neurorehabilitative Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Care
4. Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for Our Survivors
5. Pass the Major Richard Star Act
6. Amplify Women Veterans' Voices in Policy and Government to Address Issues Disproportionately Affecting Them
7. Expand Access to VA Care & Strengthen Retention Efforts at VA
8. Develop a National Veterans Strategy to Align Care and Benefits to Focus on Outcomes and Success
9. Honor POWs/MIAs
10. Enhance Readiness and Recruitment for the Next Generation of Veterans

## **Bolster Mental Wellness and Suicide Prevention Efforts in the VA and Armed Forces**

Since 2019, AMVETS has led the way in highlighting that mental health, more than any other issue, results in the unnecessary loss of lives for the veteran and military community. As a result of AMVETS legislative efforts insisting that the VA try new and innovative approaches to address the issue, Congress passed the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act. The law requires the VA to provide significant grants to community and non-profit organizations as well as requiring the VA to carry out innovative pilot programs to execute novel approaches to tackle the avoidable outcome of death by suicide.

Within this law, the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program (SSG Fox SPGP) was established. AMVETS has been closely monitoring this effort to ensure the program is successful in treating veterans in crisis who search for alternatives to VA mental health care. In December of 2023, the House Veterans Affairs Committee held a hearing on the success of the program, highlighting organizations like the Boulder Crest Foundation and their partnerships with the VA. These organizations are proving that alternative approaches to

mental health care, post-traumatic growth, and improving veterans' overall quality of life are efforts deserving of increased funding and attention.

In December of 2024, the VA released its National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. It showed overarching trends in veteran suicide, once again displaying an increase in veteran suicide since 2022. The lives of our service members and veterans continue to be our number one priority. AMVETS constantly explores legislative opportunities to address this problem, seek innovative solutions for bringing these numbers down, and do everything we can to keep them down.

Ideal legislative outcomes:

- Congress will re-authorize the Staff Sergeant Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, lifting the caps on funding to ensure successful models reach as many veterans as possible across the country.
- Congressional leadership will establish a Select Committee on Suicide for Veterans and Servicemembers.
- Support increased Congressional oversight at the VA to understand the proportion of veterans who previously utilized VA services at any juncture and ultimately died by suicide and ensure the massive VA budget is being used in the best manner to seek alternative solutions for veteran suicide.
- Introduce and support legislation that requires the DoD to establish a proactive footprint to help train servicemembers on what is necessary to live lives worth living and the components that create positive outcomes in our lives.

## **Ensure the Completion of a Successful and Seamless Electronic Healthcare Record**

AMVETS fully supports the VA's efforts to create a seamless and effective electronic healthcare record (EHR). For decades, the VA has faced the challenge of having to deal with a broken system of transitioning veterans from DoD to the VA. Even today, millions of veterans are suffering from lost information, lost data, paper records, and more. AMVETS is also keenly aware that VISTA is no longer a tangible option, meaning something has to take place to serve our veterans and servicemembers now adequately and in the future.



AMVETS is adamantly against using this issue for political gain and will vocally and locally fight any members who imply that ending this effort is in our nation's veterans' best interests. Nothing could be further from the truth.

However, AMVETS does support a high level of oversight and holding, particularly, the VA accountable for getting their act together on this project. When the DoD had similar issues, highly competent technical leaders were assigned to lead the implementation and were given strong authority to make decisions and make them happen. We hear numerous insinuations that this project needs to be more adequately led by VA leadership. Numerous project managers have been assigned and reassigned, and the VA at multiple levels of leadership is failing to make timely decisions which is resulting in inadequate delays.

Even so, AMVETS is still working on our veterans' moonshot to fix this long-overdue issue. The VA needs to step up to the plate because they are failing our Nation's veterans on this front. Congress must hold them accountable and possibly lead the charge on calls for resignation. However, we will not tolerate outright calls for an end to this project for short-term political gains, as this is not in the best interest of our current and future veterans and servicemembers.

AMVETS is looking forward to the continued rollout of the EHR program and its next phase of deployment in 2026. With proper oversight and accountability, AMVETS believes this will lead to ideal health outcomes for our country's veterans.

### **Promote Veteran Neurorehabilitative Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Care**

AMVETS recognizes the undeniable link between TBI and mental health challenges, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and suicidality. Veterans suffering from untreated or poorly managed TBIs often experience heightened psychological distress, exacerbating their mental health conditions and placing them at greater risk of self-harm. Given these connections, AMVETS advocates for policies that integrate mental health support into TBI treatment plans, ensuring that veterans receive holistic, interdisciplinary care that addresses both the physical and psychological aspects of their injuries.

As an organization dedicated to protecting the well-being of those who have served, AMVETS recognizes that TBIs—often sustained in combat, training exercises, or service-related incidents—can have lasting consequences on a

veteran's physical and cognitive health. Without proper care, these injuries can lead to significant impairments, including memory loss, motor function deficits, and emotional dysregulation, ultimately affecting a veteran's quality of life.

We ask Congress to pursue legislative initiatives that strengthen TBI-specific care within the VA healthcare system. Similar to the Staff Sergeant Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, AMVETS hopes that the VA can find meaningful, innovative care models from the private and nonprofit space and integrate these practices into the department.

### **Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for Our Survivors**

For decades, survivors have been working to garner a small increase in Death and Indemnity (DIC) payments for the men and women left behind after our servicemembers die in duty to our nation. Current payments are not even at par with federal workers. We all must ensure that these men and women who paid the ultimate price with their loved ones are well taken care of.

Supporting this critical change is a small way to repay that debt and highlight that our nation is grateful for their sacrifice.

The House Veterans Affairs Committee held a hearing on this issue on January 30, 2024. They discussed increasing DIC, as well as other topics relevant to surviving spouses and children. We continue to support these efforts to improve the lives of those families.

### **Pass the Major Richard Star Act**

AMVETS fully supports the immediate passage of the Major Richard Star Act. For nearly two decades, AMVETS has supported the Bilirakis family in their efforts to end the unfair and antiquated statute preventing veterans from receiving their earned Department of Defense retirement pay and disability compensation from the VA. It is unconscionable that we are reducing retirement pay by every dollar of disability pay received for those who have given so much in defense of our Nation.

### **Amplify Women Veterans' Voices in Policy and Government to Address Issues Disproportionately Affecting Them**



Addressing mental health issues specific to women is a top priority for AMVETS. In the VA's 2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, the rate at which women choose to end their own lives is over 166 percent higher than members of the same gender who never served. Male veterans, meanwhile, are 43 percent more likely to commit suicide than their peers who have only known civilian life. The rate of increase in suicides by female veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic was four times higher than for male veterans, and a significant correlation was found between suicide by female veterans and their experience with military sexual trauma (MST).

AMVETS played a pivotal role in key legislation led by Senator Gillibrand and others to reduce military sexual trauma and expand health care and benefits. We will continue to champion this issue on Capitol Hill. We will also continue to engage with Congressional staff and other VSOs on women in the military, female veterans, and issues specific to those populations.

AMVETS has also noted the astonishingly low number of veterans working as policy staffers on Capitol Hill and, more specifically, the low number of women and minority veterans working in these positions. As such, we are proud to be teaming up with the HillVets Foundation to work with them to address this shortage of women and minority voices working in these positions.

### **Expand Access to VA Care & Strengthen Retention Efforts at VA**

The VA has pledged to serve our veterans' health care needs, but the means to accessing this care is different for every veteran. Millions of rural and highly rural veterans face a unique combination of factors that create disparities in health care not found in urban areas. These include inadequate access to care, limited availability of skilled care providers, and additional stigma in seeking mental health care. There is also the continued challenge of the politicization of VA health care.

AMVETS realizes that the best healthcare option for veterans will first provide a strong, well-run, and fully staffed VA. As a support mechanism, AMVETS supports the VA's utilization of private care to provide ease of care to veterans, as is often the case for veterans in rural areas. This community care program has been the subject of many Congressional inquiries during this session.

AMVETS has been a long-time leader in working to ensure that our nation's veterans receive world-class healthcare, and we will continue to support legislation that affords the best option for veterans. AMVETS will also pursue ongoing opportunities for public-private partnerships with the VA to guarantee access to veterans regardless of where they live.

### **Develop a National Veterans Strategy to Align Care and Benefits to Focus on Outcomes and Success**

AMVETS is fully aware of the challenges of reorienting a VA system that so many veterans have come to rely on. Sadly, veterans currently existing in low-lows would have benefited from a more proactive approach had it existed previously. We have to start somewhere because our current policy is misaligned, provides negative incentives, and leads to poor outcomes.

As such, we continue to recommend that Congress create a new office with significant funding; we recommend \$1 billion to be achieved by not providing the casual annual increase to the mental health budget. The office should be given the mission of creating a National Veterans' Strategy that orients the future goals and vision of a VA that focuses on veterans maintaining their warrior wellness and providing proactive outreach, training, benefits, and services with the intent that they go on to live lives of purpose and meaning while maintaining a state of physical wellness and understanding the components of living a mentally healthy lifestyle.

### **Honor POWs/MIA's**

AMVETS is proud of President Trump's signing of Senator Elizabeth Warren's legislation, the National POW/MIA Flag Act, into law in November 2019. This bi-partisan legislation requires the display of the POW/MIA flag outside of high-profile Federal buildings and National war memorials throughout the year. Previous law only required the POW/MIA flag to be displayed on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, and Veterans Day.

AMVETS continues to encourage members of Congress to display the flag outside their offices, as is protocol. This legislation requires the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) to display the National League of Families POW/MIA flag outside of the entrance of the office of each Member of

Congress unless the Member directs the AOC to not display the flag. This requirement applies only to a Member's office in a House or Senate office building within the U.S. Capitol Grounds.

### **Enhance Readiness and Recruitment for the Next Generation of Veterans**

AMVETS believes that military readiness is the cornerstone of a nation's defense strategy, ensuring that armed forces are always prepared to respond to various threats. Effective recruitment is crucial in maintaining a robust and skilled military, ready to face any challenges that may arise and safeguard national security.

AMVETS has signed relevant letters from the Military Coalition (TMC), endorsed bills aimed at recruitment efforts, and pursued partnerships with organizations seeking to address the health and readiness of our armed forces. We believe that addressing these challenges requires targeted recruitment strategies that emphasize physical fitness and healthy lifestyles, alongside programs within the military to improve the overall health and fitness of service members.

## **LEGISLATION THAT AMVETS HAS PUBLICLY SUPPORTED IN THE 119TH CONGRESS:**

<b>Bill Number</b>	<b>Title of Bill</b>	<b>House Sponsor</b>	<b>State Sponsor</b>	<b>Status (updated 2/4/25)</b>	<b># House Cosponsors</b>	<b># Senate Cosponsors</b>
H.R. 680	The Caring for Survivors Act	Rep. Jahana Hayes	-	Introduced	1	-
H.R. 210	The Dental Care for Veterans Act	Rep. Julia Brownley	-	Introduced	37	-
H.R. 220	The Veterans Infertility Treatment Act	Rep. Julia Brownley	-	Introduced	42	-
H.R. 660	Women Involuntary Separated Earnings Remittance (WISER) Act	Rep. Julia Brownley	-	Introduced	3	-
H.R. 472 / S. 124	The Restore VA Accountability Act	Rep. Mike Bost	Sen. Jerry Moran	Introduced	26	16

## Committee Assignments

### House Veterans Affairs Committee - R

- Mike Bost (IL-12): Committee Chairman
- Amata Coleman Radewagen (American Samoa)
- Jack Bergman (MI-01)
- Nancy Mace (SC-01)
- Mariannette Miller-Meeks (IA-01): Chairwoman,  
Subcommittee on Health
- Greg Murphy (NC-03)
- Derrick Van Orden (WI-03): Chairman,  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
- Morgan Luttrell (TX-08): Chairman,  
Subcommittee on Disability Assistance & Memorial Affairs
- Juan Ciscomani (AZ-06)
- Keith Self (TX-03)
- Jen Kiggans (VA-02): Chairwoman,  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
- Abe Hamadeh (AZ-08)
- Kimberlyn King-Hinds (Northern Mariana Islands)
- Tom Barrett (MI-07): Chairman,  
Subcommittee on Technology Modernization

### House Veterans Affairs Committee - D

- Mark Takano (CA-39): Committee Ranking Member
- Julia Brownley (CA-26): Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Health
- Chris Pappas (NH-01): Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
- Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (FL-20)
- Morgan McGarvey (KY-03): Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Disability Assistance &  
Memorial Affairs
- Delia Ramirez (IL-03): Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
- Nikki Budzinski (IL-13): Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Technology Modernization
- Tim Kennedy (NY-26)
- Maxine Dexter (OR-03)
- Herb Conaway (NJ-03)
- Kelly Morrison (MN-03)

### Senate Veterans Affairs Committee - R

- Jerry Moran (KS): Chairman
- John Boozman (AR)
- Bill Cassidy (LA)
- Thom Tillis (NC)
- Dan Sullivan (AK)
- Marsha Blackburn (TN)
- Kevin Cramer (ND)
- Tommy Tuberville (AL)
- Jim Banks (IN)
- Tim Sheehy (MT)

### Senate Veterans Affairs Committee - D

- Richard Blumenthal (CT): Ranking Member
- Patty Murray (WA)
- Bernie Sanders (VT) (I)
- Mazie Hirono (HI)
- Maggie Hassan (NH)
- Angus King Jr. (ME) (I)
- Tammy Duckworth (IL)
- Ruben Gallego (AZ)
- Elissa Slotkin (MI)



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