



# Butler County Veterans Service Commission

Veterans Serving Veterans

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## From the Board of Commissioners:

The Butler County Veteran Service Commission had a remarkable year in 2017. Some might describe it as a turnaround year for the Commission. Decisions were made in 2016 and early 2017 resulting in a significant and continuous month-to-month increase of veterans served. In general, the reason for this marked success is attributable to the Commission team pulling together in areas such as outreach and customer service to raise the agency goodwill perception to our client veterans. This outstanding effort was also fueled by the advertising and marketing plan developed and managed by the combined leadership of the Executive Director and the Board of Commissioners.

The success of 2017 has resulted in a gift of momentum that we must strive to maintain in 2018. To continue the good work, we are challenged to raise the bar of continuous improvement, which was noted throughout the previous year. With the new year upon us, all hands on deck are needed to maintain the momentum the team fought so hard to achieve in the previous 12 months. Given the present momentum, there is no reason to believe that the team cannot achieve similar improvements throughout 2018.



I will close by extending my thanks and congratulations to the Butler County Team along with the management and commissioners whose efforts and focus provided the support for the results achieved in 2017. Let's resolve to make that a pivotal event enabling us to reach farther in the noble effort to serve our veteran clients.

Chuck Weber,  
Commissioner

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## Upcoming Events

- February 16: Middletown CBOC Health & Info Fair (10 am—2pm)

## Congratulations to VFW Post 7696, West Chester!!

The West Chester Veterans of Foreign War Post 7696 recently received the National Recognition Award. The award, which is signed by the VFW National Commander, recognizes the post for their sponsorship and promotion of local community activities.

VFW Post 7696 is involved in many events in Butler County and the West Chester/Mason communities. The participation of their members is outstanding and they have made an impact on the Butler County veteran community. Congratulations VFW Post

7696 and thank you ALL for your service!!





## White House VA Hotline Now Fully Staffed and Operational Around the Clock to Serve Nation's Veterans



**VA** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Today (November 29, 2017) the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that the White House VA Hotline, first launched in June as part of President Donald J. Trump's commitment to reforming VA, is now fully staffed with live agents working to serve Veterans 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. The hotline, which became 24-hour operational in mid-October, is now staffed by a team consisting of 90 percent Veterans or employees who have a Veteran family member, and is in response to Veterans' requests to talk to agents who could relate to their experienc-

es.

"The White House VA Hotline provides our nation's Veterans with a direct, dedicated contact line that allows them to interact with highly trained, live agents to answer their needs and concerns," said VA Secretary David J. Shulkin.

"Since the initial launch of the hotline in June, we listened to our Veterans, who indicated that they prefer speaking with other Veterans and Veteran family members, and we adjusted our hiring based on that feedback,"

added Shulkin.

"We're proud that the hotline is now staffed 24/7 by a team of mostly Veterans or Veteran family members who have direct knowledge of their particular concerns and can use their experience to address them in the best way possible with the resources of the VA. This represents a true win-win for Veterans and their loved ones."

Since 24/7 coverage began in October, the hotline has served more than 10,000 callers.

Hotline agents answer inquiries, provide directory assistance, (Continued on Page 4)

## Butler County Recorder—Veteran ID Card

### Butler County Veteran ID Card



The Butler County Recorder established the Veteran ID Card program in early 2017. To date, the Recorder's office has issued over 1,000 veteran ID cards. The Veteran ID Card Program is a great opportunity for those honorably discharged veterans, who are not eligible for a VA health care card to have a way to prove their veteran status. The Recorder's office is located in the County Administration Building, 130 High Street (2nd

Floor), Hamilton, OH.

In conjunction with the Veterans Service Commission, Butler County veterans are able to obtain a Veteran ID card from the Recorder's office. The card will display a picture of the veteran as well as various information regarding his/her service to our country.

In order to receive an ID card, a veteran must record their mili-

tary discharge with the Recorder's Office and show TWO of the ID's listed below. One of these forms of ID must contain a photo: original or certified birth certificate; an ID card issued by the VA; US military ID card; social security card; concealed carry permit; drivers license, state ID card; passport.

Please note: the Recorders Office must have the original or (Continued on Page 4)

## President Trump seeks to reduce suicide among recent veterans with new executive order



On January 9, 2018, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at expanding mental-healthcare for transitioning veterans as they leave the military, in an effort to reduce suicides in a group that is considered particularly at risk.

The order will take effect March 9 and is expected to provide all new veterans with mental-healthcare for at least a year after they leave the military.

According to VA Secretary, David Shulkin, the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and the VA have 60 days to develop a joint plan.

The order is especially focused on the 60% of new veterans who do not qualify for care until the government establishes that a medical issue has ties to their military service. It calls for "seamless access to mental

health treatment and suicide prevention resources for transitioning service members." The federal government estimates that about 20 veterans/day commit suicide.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2018/01/09/trump-to-unveil-new-executive-order-to-reduce-suicide-among-recent-veterans/?utm\\_term=.42c80d59cfd](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2018/01/09/trump-to-unveil-new-executive-order-to-reduce-suicide-among-recent-veterans/?utm_term=.42c80d59cfd)



## WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Butler County Veterans Service Commission works with multiple community partners to assist Butler County veterans and their family members.

The Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist at Ohio Means Jobs, Butler County is extremely instrumental in helping veterans find employment. Ohio Means Jobs offers classes on resume writing and interview techniques for both veterans and their spouses.

The Military Veteran Resource Center (MVRC) is always willing to help a Butler County veteran in need. The MVRC has a food pantry and are able to provide assistance on items with which

we cannot provide (gas cards). In past years, the MVRC has also helped Butler County veterans file their federal taxes—FREE OF CHARGE. This year, MVRC will begin helping veterans with their taxes on January 29, 2018. You can contact Dan Dunaway at MVRC @ 513-252-2395.

Many veterans come to our agency for assistance with home repairs and modifications. Our agency can only provide up to \$1,000 for home repairs (as long as the veteran meets all other requirements for our financial assistance program). Therefore, over the past year, we have collaborated with some local agencies to help with home

repairs to include: Supports to Encourage Low-Income Families (SELF), People Working Cooperatively (PWC), Habitat for Humanity, and Home Depot.

Our staff strives to find the right resources for Butler County veterans and their families in any case that we cannot provide support.



## Focus on Staff: Commissioner Tom Jeffers

Tom Jeffers enlisted into the Air Force from Pineville, KY in 1969. He attended basic training Lackland AFB in San Antonio, TX with his follow on school in Denver, CO. Tom was then assigned to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines for 15 months with a follow on assignment to Utapao, Thailand. Upon completing his 27 month tour in Southeast Asia, Tom was transferred to Pope AFB, NC. Tom was discharged in 1972 and moved to Lexington, KY and

then Hamilton, OH. Tom worked many years in the transportation/logistics industry and retired in 2014 from Rush Transportation/Logistics in West Chester.

Tom was appointed to the Veterans Service Commission in January 2015, representing The American Legion. Tom has served as the Commission President and is currently the Commission Secretary. Tom is an

active member of The American Legion Post 138, Hamilton, currently serving as the 1st Vice Commander.

Tom and his wife Sheri live in Fairfield Township with their cocker spaniel, Bentley. Mr. and Mrs. Jeffers have 2 daughters and 3 grandchildren.



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!

Do you have a question about VA Benefits or the Services that the Veterans Service Commission provides? We would like to hear from the veterans of Butler County about specific questions, comments, and concerns that we may be able to address.

A different question will be addressed in each newsletter. If you have a question that you would like for us to answer, please send an email to:

[vsc@butlercountyohio.org](mailto:vsc@butlercountyohio.org)





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We're on the web! [www.bcvets.org](http://www.bcvets.org)

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Veterans Service Commission



The Butler County Veterans Service Commission is an agency that provides veterans and their dependents reliable and professional service in providing advocacy and assistance in obtaining veterans benefits, temporary financial assistance, and transportation to VA appointments. The Butler County Veterans Service Commission works closely with our community partners to best meet the needs of the veteran families that we service, thus helping to improve the lives of veterans and their families residing within Butler County.

**White House VA Hotline Now Fully Staffed and Operational Around the Clock to Serve Nation's Veterans (Cont. from Page 2)**

document concerns about VA care, benefits and services, and expedite the referral and resolution of those concerns. Agents undergo regular updates and training on VA services based on hotline trends and are assisted by newly implemented tracking software to help VA capture and improve its response, referral and resolution processes to best support Veterans.

The hotline can be accessed at 855-948-2311 and is VA's first non-clinical, non-emergency around-the-clock call center. It provides Veterans a supplemental option to report issues if they are not being addressed through VA's normal customer service channels. The hotline's agents are located at a VA facility in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Agents have access to a multitude of resources and contact information to help Veterans. The hotline also generates real-time reports to VA experts who can help address the specific issues of Veterans as well as make better-informed decisions on where program improvements are needed.

**Butler County Recorder—Veteran ID Card Program (Cont. from Page 2)**

Certified copy of the DD214 for recording if it is not on file.

The fee to receive a Veteran ID card will be \$1.00. There is no charge to record the DD214. ID Cards will be issued between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. only.

