



Butler County Veterans Service Commission

Veterans Serving Veterans

Volume 1, Issue 10
August 1, 2019

Winners All

What is it about winning? How important or essential is winning in our culture? If we listen to some past athletes and coaches, one would think being designated a winner is the prime imperative for happiness and satisfaction in our lives.

Don't believe me? Then ask Kobe Bryant who once said, "Winning takes precedence overall. There's no gray area. No almost." If we are to believe his words, then the losers or non-winners are destined to become a bunch of depressed, hapless failures, unable to achieve the vaunted status of winner.

Perhaps the words of Emmitt Smith can add clarity when he said, "For me, winning isn't something that happens suddenly on the field when the whistle blows and the crowds roar. Winning is something that builds physically and mentally every day that you train and every night that you dream." Mr. Smith portrays winning as a process, implying the need for vision and continuous improvement. Is the victory found in the arc of success as the contestant follows the process?

As a final example, how about Roger Staubach when he said, "Winning isn't getting ahead of others. It's getting ahead of yourself." Note that his definition is the opposite of what many others maintain. Is winning one team beating another? Or is it one competitor besting a rival? Staubach's analysis brings winning down to the individual level when he states winning is "...getting ahead of yourself." For my money, his definition fits best by defining winning as besting oneself on an arc of continuous improvement. In other words, competing with ourselves.

This analysis holds true as we examine the progress of the Veterans Service Commission in Butler County. It is fair to say that a few years back, the organization was not on a winning streak. There was infighting, mistreatment, and rivalries galore. For an organization charged with the lofty goal of helping fellow veterans, the results simply weren't there. It had nothing to do with competing with other counties. All the problems were internal, among our own commissioners. Too busy feuding instead of channeling that energy to achieve greatness. It is now five years later and everyone in the organization can see the difference. All can see that the commission is on a winning streak.

What brought the commission from the precipice of failure to one of a measurable success story? The answers vary but the success boils down to the following basic precepts: 1) leadership became visible, predictable, fair, and consistent; 2) goals were simplified to include growth of numbers served; 3) results were identified, regularly reviewed, and expected to continuously improve; 4) past practices were examined, questioned, and modified to facilitate progress; 5) employees were recognized and rewarded for their successes; and, 6) expansion of capacity and ongoing focus on numbers served.

The praise for this success is attributed to all team members. Winning is not us vs. them or me vs. you. It was never about competing with the outside. The simplicity of the winning formula is found in the self-sustaining competition with our own past results. We measure our progress by competing with an earlier version of ourselves. One win makes us all winners as we strive to multiply the progress with each successive month. Look no further for an example of a winner, for that winner is found in each team member as we collectively achieve and succeed through continuous improvement.

- Chuck Weber
President, Board of Commissioners

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News from the Department of Veterans Affairs



VA Defining
HEALTH CARE EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

VA launches new health care options under MISSION Act

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched its new and improved Veterans Community Care Program on June 6, 2019, implementing portions of [the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 \(MISSION Act\)](#), which both ends the Veterans Choice Program and establishes a new Veterans Community Care Program.

The MISSION Act will strengthen the nationwide VA Health Care System by empowering Veterans with more health care options. “The changes not only improve our ability to provide the health care Veterans need, but also when and where they need it,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “It will also put Veterans at the center of their care and offer options, including expanded telehealth and urgent care, so they can find the balance in the system that is right for them.”

Under the new Veterans Community Care Program, Veterans can work with their VA health care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care based on new criteria. Eligibility for community care does not require a Veteran to receive that care in the community; Veterans can still choose to have VA provide their care. Veterans may elect to receive care in the community if they meet any of the following six eligibility criteria:

1. A Veteran needs a service not available at any VA medical facility.
2. A Veteran lives in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to Veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
3. A Veteran qualifies under the [“grandfather” provision](#) related to distance eligibility under the Veterans Choice Program.
4. VA cannot furnish care within certain designated access standards. The specific access standards are described below:
 - **Drive time to a specific VA medical facility**
 - Thirty-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health and noninstitutional extended care services.
 - Sixty-minute average drive time for specialty care.

Note: Drive times are calculated using geomapping software.
 - **Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility**
 - Twenty days from the date of request for primary care, mental health care and noninstitutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
 - Twenty-eight days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
5. The Veteran and the referring clinician agree it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran to receive community care based on defined factors.
6. VA has determined that a VA medical service line is not providing care in a manner that complies with VA’s standards for quality based on specific conditions.

In preparation for this landmark initiative, senior VA leaders will visit more than 30 VA hospitals across the country to provide in-person support for the rollout.

The VA MISSION Act:

- Strengthens VA’s ability to recruit and retain clinicians. Authorizes [“Anywhere to Anywhere”](#) telehealth across state lines.
- Empowers Veterans with increased access to community care.
- Establishes a new urgent care benefit that eligible Veterans can access through VA’s network of urgent care providers in the community.

VA serves approximately 9 million enrolled Veterans at 1,255 health care facilities around the country every year. For more information, visit www.missionact.va.gov.



Did you know? More news on the VA

'Blue water' veterans bill clears Senate, heads to White House for final signature

The Senate unanimously passed legislation codifying presumptive disability benefits status for "blue water" Vietnam veterans on Wednesday June 12, sending the bill to the White House to become law.

The legislation, passed unanimously by the House last month, has been a focus of advocates fighting to ensure nearly 90,000 veterans who served on ships in the seas around Vietnam are granted the same Veterans Affairs benefits status as troops who served on the ground or on ships stationed close to shore.

No timetable has been set for when the president may sign the measure into law.

We encourage all veterans and their dependents of "blue water" Navy veterans to make an appointment with our office so we can file for benefits that all Vietnam veterans so rightfully deserve.

Please call the office at 513-887-3600 and request an appointment with a Service Officer so we can discuss and possibly file for compensation or survivor benefits.



Focus on Staff: Service Officer Jason Cook

Jason Cook is a Service Officer with the Butler County Veterans Service Commission. He started working at Butler County Veterans Service Commission in June of 2014 as a Transportation Coordinator. After 6 months he was promoted to a Veterans Benefit Coordinator where he served in that role for 4 years. After the departure and retirement of Ed Snyder, Jason was promoted to Service Officer. He was raised in Butler County, where he still resides. Jason served 6 years in the United States Army where he was stationed at Fort Campbell with the Headquarters Battalion and served a tour in Eastern Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Jason was recently asked what his favorite thing about working for the Butler County Veterans Service Commission is, to which he replied, "Service in the military does not end when you receive your DD 214. It continues the rest of your life and I am happy to be able to assist veterans and their dependents in obtaining their benefits".

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.

If you have a question that you would like for us to answer, please send an email to: vsc@butlercountyohio.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.



Upcoming Events:

- August 4 - Purple Heart Event with Warren County Veterans Services
- November 11 - Veterans Day Event at Colligan Lodge

Honoring the Fallen:



SPC Joseph P. Collette

29, of Lancaster, Ohio, died from wounds sustained in combat operations in Kunduz province, Afghanistan, on March 22, 2019. Sgt. 1st Class Will D. Lindsay was also killed in the incident. Collette was assigned to the 242nd Ordnance Battalion, 71st Explosive Ordnance Group. It was Collette's first deployment. Collette was a recipient of the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Badge and the Senior Explosive Ordnance Disposal Badge.

Spc. Joseph P. Collette, 29, died from wounds sustained during combat operations in Kunduz province, Afghanistan.

Collette, an explosive ordnance disposal specialist from Lancaster, Ohio, was assigned to the 242nd Ordnance Battalion, 71st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group.

Collette had been in the Army since November 2010, and stationed at Fort Carson since June 2012, according to his service records.

Afghanistan was Collette's first deployment.

"The 71st Ordnance Group (EOD) is deeply saddened by the loss of Spc. Joseph P. Collette. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to his family and friends," Col. David Green, commander of 71st Ordnance Group, said in a statement.

Collete arrived in Afghanistan Dec. 27. He was a recipient of the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Badge and the Senior Explosive Ordnance Disposal Badge.