



Butler County Veterans Service Commission

Veterans Serving Veterans

Volume 1, Issue 5
May 1, 2018

From the Executive Director:

Spring has sprung here at the Butler County Veteran Service Commission! We had a productive fall and winter, serving over 3,600 veterans and family members between September and March. We have increased our online presence through Facebook digital marketing and have a continued advertising presence on WLW, 550KRC, Fox 92.5, NASH-FM, 96Rock, and WGRR. Please visit and “like” our Facebook page—Butler County OH Veterans Service Commission. Get connected on our website—bcvets.org.

Looking forward to summer, we have some great outreach events that include:

- May 19:** Cincinnati VA Women’s Expo
- Memorial Day:** Many community events being attended by our Board members as participants
- July 20 & 21:** Ohio Challenge, Smith Park, Middletown
- July 22—27:** Butler County Fair / Wednesday, July 25 is Veterans Day @ the Fair and all veterans will get in free by providing a proof of service!

If you would like us to come and meet with your

Congratulations to Local Graduating Seniors Entering Military Service

The Veterans Service Commission recently participated in two local events recognizing graduating seniors who are entering the military upon graduation from high school. On April 5, VSC Commissioners, Chuck Weber and Dave Smith, participated in the Lakota High Schools Military Recognition Ceremony. Chuck had the opportunity to speak to the students about their upcoming service and to share some of his feelings and experiences when he entered the service after graduating from college. On April 9, we had the opportunity to participate in the Military Recognition Ceremony at Butler Tech. In addition to interacting with the students, we were also able to provide information about our agency and the services that we provide to Butler County veterans.

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organization, please contact me @ 513-887-3600 and we can work on having an outreach event at your location.

Thank you for your continued support of Butler County veterans! Have a safe and prosperous spring.

Sincerely,
Caroline A. Bier
Executive Director



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Upcoming Events

- May 19: Cincinnati VA Medical Center Women’s Expo
- May 28: Memorial Day — many community events throughout the county



VA PLAN WOULD GIVE EVERY SERVICE MEMBER MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS AFTER LEAVING THE MILITARY



VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin, recently announced the VA is sending President Trump a plan that would give every service member mental health benefits when they leave the military. The plan comes on the heels of an executive order signed by President Trump in January, which aims to improve mental health resources for veterans. Shulkin said suicide prevention is a top clinical priority at the VA.

The VA has also partnered with AMVETS, a congressionally-chartered VSO, to create something called HEAL. HEAL stands for health care, evaluation, advo-

cacy and legislation.

“AMVETS is making this investment to place a team of licensed healthcare experts on the front lines where American veterans have direct access to a clinician that can guide them through the maze of the VA healthcare system,” said AMVETS national executive director Joe Chenally.

Lana McKenzie, the organization’s first chief medical executive, said the program is going to extend services to all veterans who are suffering from traumatic brain injury and individuals at high risk for suicide.

“First, we will facilitate access to

appropriate mental health screenings and treatment plans to ensure they include proper follow-up,” said McKenzie. “Second, we will use public forums, roundtables, and town hall meetings to raise awareness in local communities around the country.”

McKenzie estimates 20 veterans take their lives each day, and around 320,000 veterans incur some level of TBI during service. HEAL can be contacted at 1-833-VET-HEAL, and the corresponding e-mail address is vetheal@amvet.org.

Ohio Department of Veterans Services—Nominations Sought for Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame



The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame is accepting nominations to recognize those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces and continue to contribute to our communities, state, and nation through exceptional acts of volunteerism, advocacy, professional distinction, public service or philanthropy.

The program sets the standard for recognizing Ohio’s veterans for accomplishments beyond

Their military service. In addition, it is a fitting way to say “thank you for your service to our nation and thank you for your continued service to our communities.

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame includes captains of industry, professional educators, political champions,

And civic supporters. Our hon-

orees include some of Ohio’s most recognized citizens.

Chances are you know a veteran who deserves to be inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. You are encouraged to nominate that deserving veteran today.

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Veterans Financial Protection Law Sent to President



The U.S. Senate recently passed the *Veterans Care Financial Protection Act*. A bipartisan bill, the legislation was introduced by Rep. Matt Cartwright. The objective of the bill is to crack down on scam artists who divert federal funds from the Veterans Affairs Aid and Attendance (A&A) program. The A&A program is meant to provide support for older and low-income veterans who need assisted care.

The benefit pays for assisted living or in-home personal care for veterans who qualify for a VA pension and are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person.

Some of the scams that have been discovered related to A&A include charging veterans fees for obtaining the benefit, even though the application process is free. Other scams have involved

taking control of a veteran’s assets, where they’ve then been moved into an irrevocable trust or annuity. The veteran then can’t access it again for many years and it can potentially disqualify them from Medicaid and other assistance programs.

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NURSING HOME INFORMATION LUNCHEON

On April 5, the Veterans Service Commission held a luncheon for nursing homes located in Butler County. This was an opportunity to get nursing home administrators and social workers connected with our staff to find out what benefits their veteran residents may be eligible to receive. In some cases, surviving spouses of veterans who are in nursing home care may also be eligible for VA benefits.

Executive Director, Caroline Bier, briefed those in attendance on the transportation program and the financial assistance program that is offered by the Commission. Chief Service Officer Matt Jones, discussed VA bene-

fits, specifically, service connected disability compensation, non-service connected pension, and widows pension.

Connecting with community resources is a top priority for the Butler County Veterans Service Commission. Establishing relationships with nursing home personnel is an effective way to ensure that veterans living under their care are being educated and connected with county, state, and federal veteran benefits. We are thankful for the personnel who attended the luncheon and who are committed to helping their residents.



Focus on Staff: Chief Service Officer Matt Jones

Matt Jones is a native Hamiltonian. He joined the Army after graduating high school. Matt completed his basic training at Ft. Benning, GA and AIT at Ft. Gordon, GA. After his training he was stationed at Ft. Hood and deployed to Iraq with the 64th MP Co in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After his discharge from active duty, he returned to Hamilton.

After his discharge, Matt attended Miami University obtaining Bachelor's of Science in Market-

ing and later obtained a Master's of Science in Management from Kaplan University. Matt was also a member of the US Army Reserves until 2008.

Matt began working for the Butler County Veterans Service Commission in July 2009 as a Veteran Benefit Coordinator and now serves in the position of Chief Veterans Service Officer.

Matt says the most fulfilling part of his job is being able to help

veterans get the services that they need to better themselves and the lives of their families. "To help veterans begin to understand that the things they do on a daily basis are a direct result of their service, and help guide them towards the assistance that changes their lives is overwhelmingly fulfilling."



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





Veterans Serving Veterans

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We're on the web! www.bcvets.org

Like us on Facebook @ Butler County OH
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.

Veterans Financial Protection Law Sent to President (Cont. from Page 2)

"The A&A benefit is crucial for veterans who need help with in-home care or assisted living. Unfortunately, predatory scam artists exploit veterans by turning the well-deserved A&A benefit into a financial nightmare," Cartwright, D-17, Moosic, said in the release.

"I'm thrilled the Senate passed our bipartisan, common-sense proposal to safeguard veterans from these scams. I thank my colleagues in the Senate for their hard work on this bill."

NO VETERAN OR FAMILY MEMBER SHOULD EVER HAVE TO PAY TO APPLY FOR THEIR BENEFITS. THESE SERVICES ARE OFFERED FREE OF CHARGE BY THE BUTLER COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION AS WELL AS THE COMMISSIONS IN ALL 88 COUNTIES THROUGHOUT OHIO.

**Ohio Department of Veterans Services—
Nominations Sought for Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame (Cont. from Page 2)**

To be considered, the veteran must meet the following criteria:

- must be a past or current Ohio resident
- have received an honorable discharge
- be of good moral character

Nomination deadline is June 1, 2018. Guidelines, a sample nomination and more information are available at <http://dvs.ohio.gov/main/library/news-release/EmailtoEncourageNominationtoOhioVeteransHallofFameMarch192018.pdf>

