



Illinois Veteran News

An Update from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs ★ January 2018

★ From the Director



Erica Jeffries

Happy New Year! We're excited to kick off 2018 fully energized to Make Things Happen! We're motivated to continue making an impact across our great state as we serve our Illinois Heroes and their families!

During our Veteran's Day program last fall, Governor Rauner and I announced the launch of **HONOR 200 Veterans, a signature program of the Illinois Bicentennial Celebration**. In partnership with the Illinois Bicentennial Office, the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs will honor the work of 200 Veterans from across the State whose contributions are above and beyond the call of duty. Nominations will be evaluated on their achievements and on the extent to which their contributions have aided, benefited and provided inspiration to their community. **Please nominate an Illinois Veteran today!** More information on this wonderful program can be found in this month's newsletter.

Our Tiny Boots program is growing! We started this wonderful program on Valentine's Day last year. I'm happy to state that this program is proving to be a great asset to our Illinois Veterans. Tiny Boots offers free child care for any Illinois Veteran who has a medical appointment or job interview. And in a few weeks, we will be announcing additional counties where this program is available. For full details on this program go to our website – www.illinois.gov/veterans and click on Tiny Boots.

We are continuing to host commemorations acknowledging the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Under the direction of the Department of Defense, we proudly conduct a heartfelt program on behalf of the nation that recognizes and honors our Vietnam veterans. We salute our veterans of the Vietnam War - especially those who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action – for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States. We held a program just last week at the Jesse Brown VA hospital and will continue the programs throughout the year. Be sure to check our social media and our website calendar for all upcoming events.

Our mission at the IDVA is very simple. To serve those who have served. In doing so, we serve not only the men and women who have worn the uniform, but also their families. It is our privilege to be able to help our veterans receive the benefits they have earned through service to our nation. Our goal is to empower our veterans and their families to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

We know there are many veterans within our great state who do not require any assistance – but we still want to encourage you to "Stand Up and Be Counted!" by registering with your local VSO. In doing so, you're helping IDVA to do a better job of planning for services, seeking federal funding and understanding the needs of our veteran communities statewide. [Click here to register.](#)

We Thank you for your service and for your sacrifice and we at the IDVA look forward to offering our services to You.



The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Illinois Bicentennial Committee will honor the work of 200 veterans from across the State of Illinois, whose contributions are above and beyond the call of duty as they dedicate their time and energy to assist their fellow veterans and service members. Nominees are evaluated based on their achievements, and on the extent to which their contributions have aided, benefited and provided inspiration to their Community at large.

To nominate an Illinois Veteran, go to our website – www.illinois.gov/veterans and click on Honor 200. You will find the full guidelines and nomination form. 200 Illinois Veterans and their guest will be honored on December 3, 2018 at a Bi-centennial Gala held at the United Center in Chicago.

Please nominate your veteran today!

★ IDVA Retirements

Congratulations to four of our IDVA employees who retired from service at the end of 2017. All were valuable employees to our department and will be missed.

Earl White was the Southern Division Field Supervisor since 12/5/2005. Mark Saunders started with us as a Computer Systems Software Specialist III in 1994 and retired as an Information Systems Analyst 2. Doree Vetter was one of our Administrative assistant 1 and had been with the department for many years. And VSO Cynthia Green retired as well after serving for over 22 years. We thank you for the years of arduous work here at IDVA and wish you the very best in your retirement!



(L-R) Robert Iverson, Cynthia Greene and IDVA Asst. Dir. Harry Sawyer receiving her certificate of appreciation for her 22 years of service with the IDVA.



Director Jeffries honored Mark with the IT team at a Central Office Holiday pot luck luncheon. (L-R) Brian Daugherty, Mike Putnam, Chris Pence, Director Jeffries and Mark Saunders. With Mark's great sense of dry humor, he was showing us that he was the most decorated IDVA employee.

★ Employee of the quarter – Dana Herring



Dana Herring, RN II at the Veterans Home in Quincy is the Employee of the Quarter! Her nominators state, 'Previously versed in hospital electronic charting, she has been very supportive to us older/less computer savvy employees, sharing tips to

use computers. She brings a friendly, professional, caring, smiling, team player, generous manner to her tasks. Dana has known personal sorrow and can relate

well to the aging challenges of our residents. She helps us all laugh in times of stress.' Her coworkers tell us she has a very positive attitude, is knowledgeable and offers the best care possible to our residents. Congratulations Dana, your caring attitude and friendly professionalism has shown our veterans and their families that we are there to help them thrive in our great state!

Honorable mentions go to:

Amanda Wilson, Nursing; Stacy Trautvetter, Ward Clerk; Adam Mize, Nursing; Sherri Whitmer, Administration

★ 2018 Illinois Laws Impacting Veterans

Flag Display-Government Notification

(HB 3017/ PA 100-0033): Establishes that, in addition to IDVA, any other state or federal entity, agency, or person can notify the governor of the death by hostile fire of an Illinois resident member of the United States Armed Forces.

Redefining Military Economic Development

Committee *(HB 3032/ PA 100-0144):* This law changes the name of the Interagency Military Base Support and Economic Development Committee to the Illinois Military Economic Development Committee (MEDC).

Military Service Member Relief *(HB 2449/ PA 100-0264):*

Allows service members to terminate or suspend certain service contracts.

Cancer Awareness for Veterans *(SB 838/ PA 100-0224):*

Requires the Department of Public Health to promote awareness and programs for cancer screening of veterans.

Veteran Service Animals *(SB 866/ PA 100-0084):*

Requires the Department of Veteran Affairs to provide returning veterans with informational resources on how to acquire service animals.

Veterans' Court *(SB 1238/ PA 100-0088):* Allows the Veteran and Servicemembers Court programs to operate in more than one county in the Circuit at the discretion of the Chief Judge.

U.S. Coast Guard Plate *(HB 2595/ PA 100-0073):*

Creates the US Coast Guard license plate.

Veterans Court Post Adjudication

(SB 1312/ PA 100-0426): Removes the State's Attorney approval requirement for participation in the Veteran and Servicemember Court. This law also provides that a defendant may be admitted into a Veterans & Service members Court program with the approval of the court.

Vital Records-Military Service *(SB 1693/ PA 100-0310):*

Allows the veteran's death certificate to include a deceased veteran's status and branch of military service.

Prevention of Veteran Suicide *(HB 2647/ PA 100-0482):*

Provides that the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs shall coordinate with specific entities, groups, and organizations to implement the provisions and initiatives to alleviate and lower the number of veteran suicides in Illinois.

Higher Education Military Experience *(HB 3701/ PA 100-0195):*

Requires each public institution of higher education, and any institution that receives MAP funding, to adopt a policy for awarding academic credit for prior military training and programs, and to develop a procedure for receiving the necessary documentation to assess military transcripts.

Vehicle CD-Waive Reclassification Registration Fee

(HB 374/ PA 100-0246): Allows veterans with specialty veterans plates to replace them with another type of plate without paying the fee.

★ IDVA Calendar

02/04 4 Chaplain Program – *Hines Hospital - Chicago*

02/08 Black History Month Program

– *Urbana National Guard Armory - Urbana*

02/28 Desert Storm Remembrance Ceremony

– *Lindenwood University – Belleville*

03/15 Women Veterans Symposium – *Shiloh*

03/21 IDVA Veteran Outreach Program

– *O'Fallon Library – O'Fallon*

03/29 50th Vietnam Veteran Commemoration

– *Springfield*

Find details about all these events and others on our Events page of our website -

<https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/about-us/events/Pages/default.aspx>

★ IDVA is Hiring

We have several positions open throughout the State of Illinois. If you go to our website www.illinois.gov/veterans and click on IDVA employment, you will find all the positions available in our department. If you are interested in applying for a RN position, please contact the Veteran Home closest to you or our Central Office in Springfield. Click here for contact information for our HR office at each location - <https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/IDVAEmployment/Pages/default.aspx>

★ Follow us



IDVA website

www.illinois.gov/veterans

Facebook

www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisWomenVeterans/#>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/ILVetsAffairs>

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/il-dva>

★ New employees



Heidi K. Morris

Heidi Morris is the Senior Program Policy Advisor located in Springfield. For the past four years, she was the Plans, Operations, and Training Officer at Lincoln's Challenge Academy, where she worked to improve operation efficiency and develop

new training programs for cadets and staff. Prior to working at the Challenge, Heidi worked as an online education consultant teaching organizational management and leadership courses for several universities.

Heidi graduated from Northern Illinois University, in 1996, with her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science with a focus on Public Law and a degree in Military Science, which she obtained through the NIU ROTC program and served with the Army Reserve for an abbreviated time. Heidi earned her Master of Arts degree in Emergency Management, in 2013, from American Military University. Heidi currently lives in Mahomet, IL; as a mother of two boys you can frequently find her on the football field sideline or next to a wrestling mat cheering them on.



Tyler Janiak

Tyler joined us on December 1st and is the new VSO in LaSalle Co at the LaSalle Veterans Home. Tyler is a veteran of the U.S. Army where he served as a Paralegal Specialist. While on active duty he completed a tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2014. His service

awards included two Army Commendation Medals, an Army Achievement Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with a Campaign Star and the Global War on Terror Service Medal. He comes to us from Illinois Department of Correction where he served as a Corrections Officer. Tyler was born and raised in Central Illinois and currently lives in Princeton. He enjoys spending time with his family, watching sports, and hanging out with friends.



State of Illinois
Department of Veterans' Affairs



Illinois Department of
Veterans' Affairs

★ Follow us

