Illinois Veteran News

An Update from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs ★ June 2017

★ From the Director

LifeNav

Military service can be dangerous and difficult. For many of our service men and women, returning to civilian life can pose some challenges. LifeNav is a new program to help with this transition. **LifeNav** is a FREE program for all transitioning veterans who are asking themselves, "Now what do I do?" LifeNav is led by veterans who have their own transition stories. Each two hour session of the program will focus on a topic relating to veteran transition, such as; personal narrative, personal branding; leveraging social media and articulating your 'Pitch'. Following each LifeNav session, veterans are invited to stay and join the Bunker Labs team and aspiring veteran entrepreneurs at "Bunker Brews" for peer mentoring and social networking. LifeNav starts on Thursday, June 15 and the second session will be held on Thursday, July 20th. These sessions will continue once a month until the end of the year. Interested? To register click here - **https://www.eventbrite.com/e/join-us-for-lifenav-tickets-34546305931**

The 2017 Department of Defense (DoD) Warrior Games will be held June 30 – July 8 in Chicago, IL. Approximately 250 seriously wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans will participate in the competition. The wounded warrior athletes will represent the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force and Special Operations Command. Teams include active-duty service members and veterans with upper-body, lower-body, and spinal cord injuries; traumatic brain injuries; visual impairment; serious illnesses; and post-traumatic stress. I hope you would find time to attend one of the events! To learn more go to **dodwarriorgames.com**

June and July are typically the months when Veteran Service Organizations host their statewide conventions. It's during these two months that we have a prime opportunity to say "**THANK YOU!**" to these very important partners. These organizations have done so much for our all of our veteran's homes and our residents across the state, offering not only material donations, but fellowship that truly affect these heroes on a daily basis. We know that wherever there is a veteran in need, these fine organizations are not far offering whatever they can to the veteran and their family. We look forward to seeing you at your Statewide Conventions. Thank you for your kindness, donations and true concern for our Illinois Heroes.

Erica Jeffries

Director, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs

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.

★ News from Home

Anna Veterans Home

He was her something Blue

When Ali was planning her wedding to Matt Ferrell she knew what would be the perfect blue' for her wedding....her Uncle Bill!

Bill Eblen is a resident of our Veteran's home in Anna, IL. Bill is one of our World II/Korean War Veterans who moved in with us in 2015. For the wedding he wore his Marine uniform and became part of a day that neither he or Matt and Ali will forget! The story went 'viral' in the social network world and was found on many different networks.

Congratulations to the newlyweds!

Celebrating National Nurse Week

Home Administrator Angie Simmons asked Shelly Miller, Director of Nursing and Stacey Williamson, Assistant Dir. of Nursing to help celebrate their nurses. "The pair came up with a week full of activities, planning, buying and cooking to ensure that our members, families and staff has a fun filled week," said Administrator Simmons. One highlight of the week was the Staff Appreciation Luau with great food cooked by Shelly and Stacey.

Manteno Veterans Home

29th Annual Bike Blessing

Everyone enjoyed the 29th Annual Bike Blessing hosted by Blue Knights Illinois Chapter IX and Ridgewood Cycle Association. It is quite a display when the bikers make the circle around the facility for all to view. We thank all for the efforts in their contributions. It takes a great deal of time and effort to successfully plan this event. Administrator, Lester Robertson expressed his great appreciation for these caring bikers.

★ Employee of the Quarter

Susan Veihl has been named as the Employee of the Quarter, for the third quarter. Susan is a Registered Nurse, Charge Nurse and Unit Coordinator for the Fifer building at the Quincy Veterans Home. Her nominator stated that Susan is one of the most dedicated nurses of the facility. She knows the residents, the facility and truly cares for the veterans. Visiting family members are familiar with Susan and comforted by her knowledge of their loved ones care. Congratulations to Susan Veihl.

LaSalle Veterans Home

On Saturday, May 6 LaSalle Home residents had the opportunity to view antique Indian and Harley Davidson motorcycles. The Chief Blackhawk antique motorcycle club was the group that shared their bikes with our veterans. Home Administrator Sherri Whitmer thanked the club for sharing their classic bikes with the residents.

Quincy Veterans Home

ServPro, a local business in Quincy, donated flowers and their time at the Illinois Veterans Home to beautify the grounds/buildings. They spent time with residents and planted 36 petunias in the large flower bed in front of Elmore. Employees spent time planting the flowers along with some of the residents. Veteran Jim Downing was quoted in the Herald-Whig, “It’s therapeutic. It helps us get out and get sunlight and enjoy the surroundings.” The Servepro employees commented that they felt it was an honor to be able to meet and hear stories from the veterans.

Gardening/Flower Group Front row L to R: Gene Zalazinski, JD Downing, Fred Reinking, Lori Gough (ServPro) & Donny McQueen Back row L to R: Joe, Tim & Neil of ServPro

Ruth Doellman Teijido turned 100 years young on June 12th. Ruth is one of our wonderful residents at our Veterans Home in Quincy. Ruth was in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps during World War II. She had over 50 family members celebrate with her on Saturday, June 10th at Smith Hall on our Quincy campus. The DAR presented her with a Women's in History Award and the Army Nurse Corp organization gave her a certificate/award. Congratulations and Happy Birthday Mrs. Teijido!!.

★ IDVA Calendar

6/14 IVAC Meeting – *Manteno*
6/14 Honoring Employee of the Quarter – *Manteno*
6/15 LifeNav – *Chicago*
6/16 VFW Convention – *Springfield*
6/23 DAV Convention – *Springfield*
6/24 Chicago Cares – *Chicago*
6/28 Warrior Games Start – *Chicago*
7/04 Independence Day – *Office Closed*
7/13 IJF Military Immersion Training – *Marseilles*
7/14 American Legion Convention – *Springfield*
7/14 Veteran Hiring Event – *Springfield*
7/14 Flag Day and Army Birthday
7/15 Elder Abuse Awareness Day – *Wear Purple*
7/18 Honoring Business of the Quarter – *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**

★ Illinois State Fair

Veterans and Gold Star Family Day

August 13-Springfield ★ August 27-DuQuoin

Join for a wonderful day at the Illinois State Fair and the DuQuoin State Fair. We will have our Memorial Service for the Gold Star Families, Lunch, Drill Team competition, Benefits Expo and Job Fair at BOTH Locations. And we will end the day with a Veteran's Day Parade through the fairgrounds.

We will be announcing the **ILLINOIS VETERANS'PATRIOTIC VOLUNTEER AND APPRECIATION AWARD** and the **ILLINOIS VETERANS' BUSINESS APPRECIATION AWARD**. Go to **https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/Pages/Awards.aspx** for nomination guidelines and a nomination form. Deadline to nominate is **July 15, 2017.** It will be a great day to celebrate! We hope you can join us.

★ Warrior Games

The star-studded opening ceremony concert will officially kick off the 2017 Warrior Games, which will take place June 30 through July 8 in Chicago. Approximately 265 wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans representing teams from the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Special Operations Command, as well as the United Kingdom Armed Forces and the Australian Defense Force will compete in an inspiring display of athleticism and resilience. Most sporting events are open to the public and free of charge. Tickets for the July 7 finals for wheelchair basketball and sitting volleyball, being held at the United Center, will also be available through Ticketmaster. Stay tuned for on-sale dates and ticket prices.

Buy your tickets now for the opening ceremony and concert of the DoD Warrior Games, featuring Grammy award-winning artists Blake Shelton and Kelly Clarkson, and hosted by Jon Stewart. The event will take place July 1 at 7 p.m. CT at Soldier Field in Chicago.

Tickets are available online Ticketmaster. Tickets prices are set at $40, $60 and $80. Order your tickets online at **https://www1.ticketmaster.com/warrior-games-blake-shelton-and-kelly-chicago-illinois-07-01-2017/event/040052B3E6A33D23?artistid=807367&tm_link=tm_header_search**