

in this issue >>>

[Transitioning to a Civilian Career](#)
[PennState Online Program for Veterans](#)
[Female Homelessness Increasing](#)
[A Letter from Sgt. David Hanson](#)

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Monthly News from the VA and Military Support Groups

The Legacy



Our Mission

The mission of Legacy Beyond Valor is to assist returning veterans find a place in society. They return changed by things they have seen and experienced, but the world they left behind has no comprehension of the challenges they face.

Our mission is to:

- Communicate that we DO understand and that we stand ready to help.
- Have programs in place that returning Veterans can immediately plug into.
- Establish a network of specialists in all fields, both private and public, who are committed to using their skills to help returning Veterans.

If you made it out of the valley,
reach back and lift others.



Transitioning to a Civilian Career Help is Available

You're finally home and free to do what you want, when you want. Right? Or are you? The responsibilities for paying for a home and family continue forward, but your income has just ended. You haven't had to look for a job in years. How do you begin to go about this?

If you have no idea where to start, begin by turning on your computer. One of these two sources will be sure to get you started. They have worked hard to put this information together so you don't have to do it.

Welcome home and good luck in your job search!

www.VA.gov/careers-employment

www.military.com

You may have been discharged, but as a veteran, you are connected to the VA for life. The VA.gov website is full of help for veterans and their spouses, and career building is just one of the many things they offer.

From the day you return to civilian life, they are available to help you in your job search.

- If you return with a service-related disability, they will help you find a job that you can do.
- If you need more training to pursue the job you want, they can provide the training you need.
- If you want to start your own business, they will connect you with the Department of Labor for assistance with career advice and resume assistance.
- They can also provide connections to employers who want to hire Veterans and their spouses.

I cannot begin to share everything military.com offers to you. You will just have to log on to the Internet and see for yourself. But their Veteran jobs page is packed full of assistance.

- It begins with a form you can complete to search for job fairs in your local area.
- It also offers a section with links to jobs by career area. If you or your spouse are trained in the medical field, you can search for jobs in that field being offered by employers wanting to hire Veterans and their spouses.
- They also offer help preparing resumes and learning interview techniques.
- There are videos and articles to help you prepare for a job search.
- They have connections to jobs requiring security clearance.



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Our commitment to service members, veterans, and their families has been honored by prominent publications and organizations such as *U.S. News & World Report*, *Military Times*, and *Military Advanced Education & Transition*.

[Penn State World Campus](#)

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This information is copied from military.com, and our thanks go out to both military.com for their exhaustive efforts on behalf of veterans everywhere and to PennState for their commitment to helping veterans and their families prepare for new careers following their service to the United States.

Q. What's the difference between ignorance and apathy?

A. I don't know and I don't care.

Female Homeless Veterans Growing at Greater Rate Than Male Counterparts

From 2016 to 2017, the number of male homeless veterans increased by 1%. During the same time period, the number of female homeless veterans increased by a staggering 7%.

The National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans reported to the VA in 2016 that 36,443 female veterans were then homeless, a figure that had tripled over the course of the five-year study. The center anticipates those figures will continue rise to 40,000 homeless female veterans by the year 2025, a 9% increase over a 10-year period.

The most alarming aspect of these statistics is that many (if not most) homeless female veterans were victims of sexual trauma during their time in the United States military. They carry deep-seated resentment toward the military and the VA, who they believe should have protected them from assault by fellow soldiers. This resentment has led many to choose not to identify themselves as veterans. They refuse help from anyone offering to assist “veterans” because of their deep feelings of betrayal by the government they served.

Although the VA admits knowledge of the problem of sexual assault within the military, little seems to be happening to stop this behavior. For that reason, we can expect these numbers of traumatized female veterans to continue to grow without intervention.

A Successful Approach to Women’s Healing

The VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System in Leeds, Massachusetts, is taking the lead in helping female veterans come back from the traumas they have experienced using a unique holistic healthcare approach.

The center reported that almost all their residents had experienced some form of trauma during childhood, with 80% experiencing further sexual trauma in the military.

Holistic treatment involves treating the whole person -- mind, body and spirit. With a renewed feeling of self-worth, female veterans successfully transition back into life in the community.

Six sides of wellness are included in the holistic approach featured at the center: emotional, physical, occupational, social, intellectual and spiritual.

Instead of a heavy schedule of counseling and group therapy, residents of the holistic program are given access to the following activities which provide much-needed peer-to-peer support: yoga, workouts, art therapy classes, walking clubs, and sessions on spirituality, goal setting and financial aid.

Thanks to the center, the VA is discovering that when it comes to recovery, social health is more important to healing for women than it is for men.

VA Programs for Homeless Veterans

For more information on VA programs providing Veterans with [housing solutions](#), [employment opportunities](#), [health care](#), [justice- and reentry-related services](#) and [more](#), visit these resources. Learn more about these programs at [VA’s Programs for At-Risk Veterans and Their Families page](#)

The average age of people living in our military retirement community is 85. Recently, a neighbor turned 100, and a big birthday party was thrown. Even his son turned up.

“How old are you?” a tenant asked.

“I’m 81 years old,” he answered.

The tenant shook her head. “They sure grow up fast, don’t they?”

Thomas Clements, Catonsville, Maryland



Sometimes we cannot write an article better than the soldier himself. Following, in his own words, is a plea from Dave Hanson, a Vietnam sergeant in the USAF, Phu Cat AFB, Cobra Flt, Night Ambush Team, reprinted from an article on the [VantagePoint Blog](#)

My Fellow Vets,

I'm a Vietnam Veteran. Like in any war, we had moments of extreme, close encounters and moments of boredom. We came home to a political nightmare where we were hated, spit upon, and called names. I, like many that came home, suffered from Survivor's Guilt and something that we'd never heard of at the time: PTSD.

We went to Vietnam as soldiers and came home as individuals, so I lost contact from my unit. I never contacted the VA; I had enough of the military. I was young, strong, and independent. I could deal with anything at the time. I went back to school, got a job, got married, began a family with two wonderful kids. I was living the dream but I had a secret that I kept from everyone.

As I aged, my PTSD turned into "flashbacks," nightmares, and three suicide attempts. The last was the worst. I sat on our kitchen floor at midnight, mad and scared. That's when I contacted the VA Suicide Hotline and was convinced to go to the VA Hospital. I snuck some clothes from our bedroom. I was going to sneak out, but my wife woke up and demanded to drive me.

My secret was out.

I got the help I needed from VA through the Prolonged Exposure Therapy Program (PE). My family now knows everything. It's been six years and counting with no flashbacks, nightmares, or suicide attempts. My life and my family's lives have changed. I believe I came through all this hell for a reason, and that is to help other Veterans who suffer. The suicide rate among all Veterans absolutely scares me, but most troubling is those who were like me: the 70% who don't have any contact with the VA.

Get the help you need. Do it!

The Legacy Newsletter

Our apologies for the lapse in our newsletters. Hopefully we are back and can keep up with our monthly schedule.

If you know of an upcoming event impacting Veterans or Active Duty Military families or an inspiring story we could share, please email me at wendy.leonard@legacybeyondvalor.net.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Wendy Leonard

Director of Communications
Legacy Beyond Valor