

# Ashtabula County Veteran's Services Commission

Quarterly Newsletter | ISSUE 3 | SEPTEMBER 2022 | [www.ashtabulaveterans.com](http://www.ashtabulaveterans.com) | 

## The VSC from July – December 2022

Since January, our office has submitted 744 new claims with 100 previously submitted claims being awarded. The awarded claims account for \$1,254,383.90 in retroactive compensations being paid out to veterans in Ashtabula County! The Veterans Service Officers of this Commission are second to none! They work hard to help you so that you can acquire help from the Department of Veteran's Affairs Health Care system, among other VA benefits!

We continue to hold our monthly raffles in an effort to entice our veteran community to stop by and see us to complete a benefits well-check.

The Commission is still actively looking for new Volunteer Drivers for our Transportation Program. There is no requirement to be a veteran to perform this task. For information and an application, please contact our office.



The Veteran's Appreciation Ceremony took place at the County Fair on August 11 and it was amazing! We were blessed with amazing speeches from the Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, Major General Retired, Ms. Deborah Ashenhurst, as well as retired Army First Sergeant and Conneaut native, Mr. Nicholas Church. The Young Marines provided Color Guard support as well as local veterans who represented their branch of service by wearing a branch specific jersey while standing in front of their branch colors. There were more than 120 veterans in attendance, which was twice as many in attendance as last

year. The VSC looks forward to growing this ceremony for next year and hopefully doubling the attendance once again.



### PACT ACT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What are the PACT Act key components?**

- The Act expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic-exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.
- VA will improve the decision-making process for determining what medical conditions will be considered for presumptive status.
- Every enrolled Veteran will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening every five years. Veterans who are not enrolled, but who are eligible to enroll, will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.
- VA health care staff and claims processors will receive toxic exposure-related education and training.
- The Act requires research studies on mortality of Veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War, Post-9/11 Veteran health trends, and Veteran cancer rates.
- The Act will help VA build a stronger, more skilled workforce to meet the growing demand for benefits and services.
- The Act authorizes 31 new medical facilities across the country, providing greater access to VA health care.

**What new or expanded presumptions will the Act create and when will they be in effect?**

VETERANS AND SURVIVORS CAN FILE CLAIMS FOR ALL CONDITIONS LISTED IN THE PACT ACT PRESUMPTIVE LIST.

**For Gulf War and Post-9/11 Veterans, that includes:**

- Brain cancer, Glioblastoma, Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Head cancer of any type, Lymphoma of any type, Lymphatic cancer of any type, Neck cancer, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Melanoma, Asthma (diagnosed after service), Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchitis or obliterative bronchitis.
- Emphysema, Gastrointestinal disease, Interstitial lung disease (ILD), Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, Sarcoidosis, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

**For Vietnam Veterans and other Veterans exposed to tactical herbicides, that includes two Agent Orange presumptive conditions:**

- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS), High blood pressure (Hypertension).

**How can Veterans apply for VA health care?**

Apply online at [va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction).  
Call our toll-free hotline at 877-222-4367, M-F 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET.  
Mail a completed, signed Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-1062).

Bring a completed, signed VA Form 10-1062 with you to your nearest medical center or clinic or get help through your state's Department of Veterans Affairs Service Officer.

Get help filing your claim by working with an accredited representative.

**If a Veteran was previously denied a claim, what can they do?**

VA will contact Veterans when a presumption of service connection is established or changed. However, Veterans previously denied a toxic-exposure related claim are encouraged to file a supplemental claim. Once a supplemental claim is received, VA will review the claim under the new law.

To learn about standard VA disability claims, supplemental claims, secondary claims, and more visit: [va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file](https://va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file).

Learn more and sign up at [va.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).  
Download the VA Health and Benefits App.  
Call us at 1-800-MYVA411 (1-800-698-2411).  
Find a VA at [va.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/).

## MONTHLY RAFFLES

**July Winner – Kayleen Kennedy** of Ashtabula. Kayleen served in the Ohio Army National Guard from 2018-2022. She was a Human Resource Specialist during her term. Kayleen worked in the Mid-Ohio Food Bank during the COVID-19 pandemic to assist the communities in need of food and supplies and also assisted with human resource work for recruiting and retention. Kayleen was honorably discharged from the National Guard and now spends her days raising her baby and taking in the joys of motherhood. Kayleen took home a metal tattered flag with the Pledge of Allegiance inscribed on the flag's stripes, provided by TNT Archery & Outdoors. She also took home a voucher for \$350 to be redeemed by Flawless Cleaning and De-tailing located in Geneva.

**August Winner – Robert Kase** of Geneva. Mr. Kase was drafted in the Army when he was 20 years old from Geneva, OH. He was a mechanic on helicopters working on glass and sheet metal repair. He went to basic training at Ft. Knox, KY and went to AIT at Ft. Eustis, VA. Then he received orders to transfer to Vietnam. He continued to do helicopter repairs and worked on 13's, 23's and Hueys. He was stationed in a combat zone and was always under fire in Vietnam. He was in Cam Ranh Bay, Natrang and Da Nang. He served almost two years in Vietnam. He came home in 1969 and was in the Inactive Ready Reserve through 1974. He worked 23 years at Reliance Electric and worked 57 years driving tow truck. He retired almost two years ago at age 74. He just celebrated his 50 years of marriage in February to Denise Kase. Robert won a hand-crafted rocking chair, provided by Greg's Custom Wood Creations and a voucher for \$350 to be re-deemed by Flawless Cleaning and Detailing located in Geneva.

**September Winner –** The September winner will be drawn on October 4, 2022. The winner will receive a metal tattered flag with the Pledge of Allegiance inscribed on the flag's stripes, provided by TNT Archery & Outdoors. They will also receive a voucher for \$350 to be redeemed by Flawless Cleaning and Detailing located in Geneva.



# VETERANS' TASK FORCE

On August 25, we held the fourth meeting of the Veterans' Task Force. We continue to work together for the betterment of our veteran community. If you would like to attend one of these meetings on behalf of your orga-

nization or company, please feel free to reach out to our commission for details. The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for October 27 at 6 p.m. in the VFW Post 943, located at 4102 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004.

## VETERAN MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The Veteran Mentorship Program still needs applicants. The VSC is the administrator of this program and will provide applications to any interested, Honorably discharged veterans in Ashtabula County. This is a great program that is meant to help veterans in lieu of jail time.

The VSC will post a banner in front of our Commission throughout October and November in recognition of the Navy and Marine Corps Birthdays. All verified Navy and USMC veterans that come into our office during their respective birthday months will receive an American Flag/Branch Flag lapel pin as a thank you for your service!



## PLANNED EVENTS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER

The VSC has five available service officers to support your veteran centric event during any time of the year. We are available to speak or simply

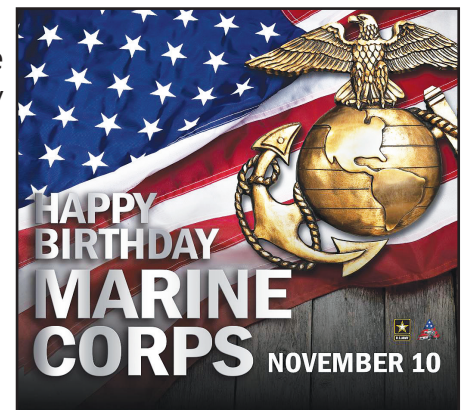


provide ourselves as resources to your events. Submit a request to the Director at [BMSchwartzfigure@ashtabulacounty.us](mailto:BMSchwartzfigure@ashtabulacounty.us) and we will do our best to support!

For the Navy Birthday, we will be providing all

Navy veterans that come into the office with a US Flag/Navy Flag lapel pin

For the Marine Corps Birthday, we will be providing all Marine Corps veterans that come into the office with a US Flag/USMC Flag lapel pin.



## VETERANS SALUTE PROGRAM

The VSC will be implementing a new program to recognize our veterans that are either staff or residents in each of the nursing homes and assisted living facilities throughout Ashtabula County.

The ceremonies will take place the week leading up to Veterans Day. All veterans taking part in the ceremony will receive a



certificate of appreciation, lapel pin, and other small tokens of appreciation for their service.

The ceremonies will not be open to the public, however if you have a family member in one of these facilities, we hope that they are able to attend and be recognized.



**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR**

## Days to observe in the coming months

Oct. 13 – U.S. Navy Birthday

Oct. 26 – Day of the Deployed

Oct. 27 – Navy Day

Nov. 1-5 – National Veterans Small Business Week

Nov. 10 – USMC Birthday

Nov. 11 – Veterans Day

Dec. 1 – Civil Air Patrol  
(USAF Auxiliary) Birthday

Dec. 7 – National Pearl Harbor  
Remembrance Day

Dec. 13 – U.S. National Guard  
Birthday

Dec. 18 – National Wreaths  
Across America



## THANKSGIVING VOUCHERS

The VSC will provide a \$20.00 voucher for any type of meat to be redeemed at the Saybrook Giant Eagle to assist with your holiday meal. Veterans or widows of veterans may stop by the



VSC during our regular business hours between the dates of November 14-23 to secure their voucher. Each family is eligible to receive one voucher. The vouchers will expire on November 24, so you are encouraged to use them immediately upon receipt.

## CHRISTMAS VOUCHERS



The VSC will provide a \$20.00 voucher for any type of meat to be redeemed at the Saybrook Giant Eagle to assist with your holiday meal. Veterans or widows of veterans may stop by the VSC during our regular business

hours between the dates of December 12-23 to secure their voucher. Each family is eligible to receive one voucher. The vouchers will expire on December 24, so you are encouraged to use them immediately upon receipt.

# VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS IN ASHTABULA COUNTY

*There are many organizations throughout our county that support both, our local veterans and our community at large. Many of these organizations are looking to increase their numbers. If you are a veteran or the dependent of a veteran, you could potentially become a member and join their missions. Here are a few. This list will grow over time.*

## ASHTABULA, OH

### AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

POC - Jim Hamilton

(440) 964-7485 • Email - [hammycmo@gmail.com](mailto:hammycmo@gmail.com)

The purpose of the American Legion Riders is to participate in community services and other ceremonies that is in keeping with the Aims and Purposes of the American Legion. To promote motorcycle safety pro-grams and to provide a social atmosphere for American Legion members who share the same interest. To use our Association to promote and support programs of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, community services and Veteran's Organizations. The Legion Riders also provide assistance to Veterans in the local area who are in need of financial, services or any other type of assistance that the membership can provide.

### ARMY NAVY UNION 411

POC - Paul Anderson

(440) 650-2562 • Email - [pwjander@roadrunner.com](mailto:pwjander@roadrunner.com)

The Army Navy Union 411 is home to 103 regular members and nearly 75 Auxiliary members located within Ashtabula. Join us today!

### DAV BOB SWANSON CHAPTER #39 OF ASHTABULA COUNTY

Email - [davch39@gmail.com](mailto:davch39@gmail.com)

Mailing Address - PO Box 574, Andover, Oh 44003

DAV Meetings are held the SECOND WEDNESDAY of each month at 6:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 103, 1804 W 19th St., Ashtabula, Ohio 44004 and VA claims assistance is available. The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is a Veterans Service Organization for those who served our country's armed forces and were wounded or injured during that service and were Honorably Discharged or Under Honorable Conditions. The motto of Disabled American Veterans is: "Fulfilling Our Promises to the Men and Women Who Served." We are closed for Winter from December - February.

## FEED OUR VETS

POC - Tracy Bidwell • (440) 813-5131

Feed Our Vets is a once-a-month food pantry for Veterans, spouses and family. We are open every third Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon.

## GUARDIANS USA VETS BLUE CHAPTER

POC - Crystal Mathes

(440) 789-8129 • Email - [crystalmathes2020@gmail.com](mailto:crystalmathes2020@gmail.com)

Guardians is a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization that has helped Veterans for 25 years with emergency needs. We also help with Appliances, Furniture, mobility items, household needs, groceries and clothes.

## MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Email - [lukej68@gmail.com](mailto:lukej68@gmail.com)

Mailing Address - c/o Tom Lucas, Jr.

Adjutant; 3105 Jefferson Rd., Ashtabula, OH 44004

Veteran's Service Organization for Honorably Discharged Marine's and FMF Corpsman and Chaplains. Other Armed Forces Veterans are welcome as Associate Members. Meetings for Pvt. Henry Kalinowski Marine Corps League Detachment #782 of Ashtabula County, Ohio are usually held the FIRST SATURDAY of each month at 10:30 a.m. at the American Legion Post #103 located at 1804 W. 19th St., Ashtabula, OH 44004.

## MARINE CORPS LEAGUE AUXILIARY

POC - Lisa Dibble

(440) 344-1822 • Email - [pvthentrykalinowskimcla@gmail.com](mailto:pvthentrykalinowskimcla@gmail.com)

The purpose of the Marine Corps League Auxiliary is to band together in comradeship the members of the Auxiliary, and to create a bond of comradeship between this Auxiliary and the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps League. We are seeking the Mothers, Wives, Sisters, Daughters, Nieces, Granddaughters and Cousins of Active Duty, Reserve and Honorably Discharged U.S. Marines to serve

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and aid those Marines who are or have served us. We usually meet the SECOND Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Ashtabula Township Hall, located at the southeast corner of Route 20 and Route 11, 2718 NRE. Ashtabula, OH 44004.

## YOUNG MARINES

POC - Amy Piotrowski

(440) 812-0126 • Email: amymariepio@gmail.com

Facebook: Ashtabula County Young Marines

Website: [youngmarines.org/unit/ashtabulacounty/page](http://youngmarines.org/unit/ashtabulacounty/page)

The Young Marines is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) youth education and service program for boys and girls, age eight through the completion of high school.

The Young Marines promotes the mental, moral, and physical development of its members. The program focuses on teaching the values of leadership, teamwork and self-discipline, so its members can live and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. The Young Marines organization began in 1959 with one unit, and has grown to over 270 units with over 9,000 youth and almost 3,000 adult volunteers in 41 states, and affiliates in other countries. The Young Marines focus on Leadership, Honoring Veterans, and Drug Demand Reduction. They participate in many events throughout the county annually including parades, Toys 4 Tots, volunteering with Blue Star Mothers and Feed the Vets, camp-outs and historic trips.

## OhioMeansJobs - ASHTABULA COUNTY

A group of public, private and non-profit agencies and partner organizations that have joined forces to create a coordinated system to provide workforce services to job seekers. A resource room is located in the center which offers free use of computers, phones, and printers for use by job seekers. Career counseling and employment assistance are offered. All veterans are given Priority of Service. Veterans' employment representative, Michele Stowe-Caya (US Navy veteran) is available by appointment. Please register in [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) by creating a job seeker profile, or call (440) 350-2490.

## CONNEAUT, OH

### VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 2836

POC - Catherine Glosser • [cagcatherine@aol.com](mailto:cagcatherine@aol.com)

The VFW meets at 6 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Optimist Club, located at 514 Harbor Street in Conneaut. Join our team and help the veterans of Conneaut!

## GENEVA, OH

### THE BLUE STAR MOTHERS

POC - Amy Hutchinson

(440) 812-1150 • Email - [president.oh57@bluestarmother.us](mailto:president.oh57@bluestarmother.us)

The Blue Star Mothers of America are a non-profit, nationwide organization consisting of local chapters of mothers, and other family members of military men and women. The oath sworn to protect our nation taken by our sons and daughters has led us to serve as well. Our organization works to provide support for veterans at home and active military and families in any way we can. We also welcome mothers who have never had a child serve but are committed to supporting our Military and Veterans. We meet the 3rd Monday of the month in the Geneva VFW at 6:30 p.m.

### VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST #6846

POC - Bruce Deems (Quartermaster)

(440) 466-3127 • Email - [vfw6846@outlook.com](mailto:vfw6846@outlook.com)

"Veterans Helping Veterans"

## KINGSVILLE, OH

### AMERICAN LEGION NEAL POST 743

Address: 2606 East Center Street (Rt 20), North Kingsville, OH

POC - John Pildner Jr. (Commander) • (440) 813-4981

Dale Hayes (Vice Commander) • (440) 994-9641

Will Runyan (Adjutant) • (440) 228-6023

Email: [nealpost743@gmail.com](mailto:nealpost743@gmail.com)

Facebook: American Legion Neal Post 743 • Website: [nealpost743.com](http://nealpost743.com)

Neal Post is a small dynamic Legion Post of approximately 50 members with service from WW II (3 members) through the current War on Terror. Our reason for being is to serve our fellow Veterans and our community. We meet at 7 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month with all sessions being open to all Veterans and Community members. Events on our yearly calendar include Three Chaplains Recognition, Armed Forces Day/Echo Taps Ceremony\*, Flag placement on Veteran Graves at 8 cemetery and community locations, 3 Memorial Day Ceremonies, Flag Day Retirement Ceremony\*, August Post Picnic, Veterans Day Ceremony\*, Veterans Day Dinner, Pearl Harbor Day Breakfast, and Wreaths Across America placement and Ceremony\*. (Events marked with \* occur at and with the generous cooperation of Greenlawn Memory Gardens in North Kingsville.) Our Honor Guard has the privilege to lead Final Military Honors for all Veterans when asked.

## ORWELL, OH

### THE MUSTANG STABLE

POC - Deliarose Marroquin (Ms.M) • (440) 805-4545

The Mustang Stable is Grand Valley Local Schools' community learning center. The Mustang Stable's mission is to provide resources, opportunities, and hope to the Grand Valley Community. Resources at The Mustang Stable include clothing, shoes, hygiene products, and school supplies. The Mustang Stable is open to anyone living in the Grand Valley School District.



## VSC WEBSITE!

Find our website at [ashtabulaveterans.com](http://ashtabulaveterans.com) for a lot of great information about the services we provide. From there, you can request a service officer, take a poll to tell us how we're doing, schedule FREE transportation to your VA medical appointments, or leave feedback about the Commission to the Director. There is a calendar on the homepage where you can see different events that the VSC is involved in over the next several months. We have a Tribute Page that is dedicated to the veterans of our county. All you have to do is provide a picture of yourself or your loved one in service uniform with the conflict you served during and the city in the county that you are affiliated with and we will update our site with it.

**Please follow us on Facebook @AshtabulaVSC. From here, you will see all of our current events as well as any valuable information that we have to share that could benefit you as a veteran.**