



The United Veterans Coalition of Colorado

700 Colorado Blvd. #747 Denver, CO 80206

<http://www.uvcoc.org>

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

December 2019

Newsletter

Vol. 3 No. 12



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dennis Orr



### Officers

President  
Dennis Orr 303-870-7053  
1st Vice President  
Dick Young 720-300-3356  
[dickyounq123@gmail.com](mailto:dickyounq123@gmail.com)  
2nd Vice President  
Ed Aitken  
Recording Secretary  
Karen Hone  
Treasurer  
Paul Gremse

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UVC Newsletter  
Steve Bender 719-310-9930

I received a call from a veteran friend of mine who was asking for another veteran friend's spouse who had called asking if there were any programs to assist when the veteran needs care and the spouse/caregiver cannot handle the situation anymore. As an example, a veteran has Alzheimer's, both the veteran and the spouse are in their 80's, and the spouse has increasing difficulties coping with the veteran anymore. I said there are programs to assist through the VA Health Care System, but you have to be enrolled in VA Health Care to be eligible for those programs. In this case (and so many like it), the veteran has Tri-care but has never enrolled with the VA. I said it is never to late to enroll with the VA but the sooner the better.

While you are enrolling, this is a good time to visit a Veteran Service Officer to go over your time in the military and to file for any possible service-connected disabilities. The above example with this veteran was he was in Artillery so we know he will have hearing problems

among others. Having Service-Connected Disabilities puts you into a different category within the VA Health Care System and make you eligible for more benefits.

The VA has many great and worthy programs to assist us veterans but...you **have to** be enrolled in the VA to be eligible to take advantage of them. There are many veterans who have served but have never taken advantage of their status to enroll for a variety of reasons.

It is in your UVC's best interest to have a robust VA Health Care System able to serve all veterans.

The next UVC Member Meeting will be

December 10th at

VFW Post 9644 2680 W. Hampden Ave.,

Englewood, CO 80110.

Unable to attend. Stream it on [Facebook](#)

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Dennis Churgovich, Chair  
Communications Committee

UVC Monthly Membership Meeting  
Staffers Reports November 12, 2019

The UVC's new website has been up and running for a while now. Please visit the website at [uvcoc.org](http://uvcoc.org) and give us your feed back. The Communications Committee is open to ways to improve on the website. Your input is valuable to our success.

Now that you have gone to the website, I hope you noticed that the Home Page has the Veterans Crisis Hotline number in the top right hand corner, 1-800-273TALK (8255). The Veterans Administration staffs the Veterans Crisis Hotline with trained professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to help in an immediate crisis.

Veteran suicide is a national tragedy. On average, everyday 23 veterans take their lives. Suicide is preventable. The VA has urged all Americans to come together and take action to prevent suicide.

If you are concerned that someone in your life might be considering suicide, please watch for the following warning signs:

- \* Talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- \* Trying to get pills, guns, or other means of self-harm
- \* Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide.
- \* Exhibiting signs of hopelessness
- \* Exhibiting rage, uncontrolled anger, or desire to seek revenge
- \* Acting in a reckless manner
- \* Feeling trapped. no way out, hopeless
- \* Saying or feeling that there is no reason to live

Remember the Veterans Crisis Hotline can provide support at 1-800-273-TALK or [http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention). Please give the Crisis Line number or website to anyone you know who is exhibiting warning signs.

### Wreaths Across America

website: [wreaths-denver.org](http://wreaths-denver.org)

Steve Best: [steve.best76@gmail.com](mailto:steve.best76@gmail.com)

**(TIME CHALLENGED) The cut-off date to order wreaths is Monday, December 2.**

Ft. Logan National Cemetery will host a 2019 Wreaths Across America event on Saturday, December 14, 2019 with a short program at 10:00 am, with placement of wreaths to follow.

### Colorado Board of Military & Veterans Affairs

Ben Mestes: [reuben.mestus@dmva.slq.co.us](mailto:reuben.mestus@dmva.slq.co.us)

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/vets/dva-grants>

### Veterans Assistance Grant

This grant is open to nonprofit organizations with a 501 (c) status other than 19 or 23 and governmental entities.

ORIGINAL SIGNED COPIES OF APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED 01 DECEMBER THROUGH 01 MARCH. Late applications are not accepted.

Veterans Assistance Grant Application Packet

Veterans Assistance Grant Pre-Award Assessment

### Veterans Trust Fund

This grant is open only to organizations that are Nationally Recognized Veterans Service Organizations with a 501(c) 19 or 23 status.

ORIGINAL SIGNED COPIES OF APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED 01 DECEMBER THROUGH 01 MARCH. Late applications not accepted.

Veterans Trust Fund Application Instructions

> p3 state legis

< Staffers Notes

Veterans Trust Fund Application Forms

Veterans Trust Fund Pre-Award Assessment

### Colorado Veterans Commission - Community Living Centers

Karren Kowalski: [karren.kowalski@att.net](mailto:karren.kowalski@att.net)

*The Commission met at Homelake on 10/17/19*

*Nursing home administrator has resigned. Executive Director substituting at this time*

*Commissioners have a continuing focus on both organizational & financial issues*

### Mt. Carmel Community Colorado Springs

Nicole de Naray: [ndenaray@gmail.com](mailto:ndenaray@gmail.com)

Advocating for a Veterans Community Living Center in the Pikes Peak Region

### Office of Representative Lamborn

Anthony Archer: [anthony.archer@mail.house.com](mailto:anthony.archer@mail.house.com)

Expressed support for a "Colorado Springs" Veterans Community Living Center

### Office of Senator Cory Gardner

Steven Emmer: [Steven.Emmer@gardner.senate.gov](mailto:Steven.Emmer@gardner.senate.gov)

Wanting to enact a mental health crisis line (988)

### Veterans Benefits Administration

VBA Chris Holly      [Christopher.Holly@va.gov](mailto:Christopher.Holly@va.gov)

Blue Water Navy - 72,000 letters sent to veterans asking them to submit claims for BWN.

Start date is January 1, 2020

VA has hired a RMR VAMC LAS to start November 25, 2019 and has hired a Grand Junction LAS to start January 1, 2020 ■



A UVC attendee asked about the Million Veteran Program at the September 2019 meeting. The Million Veteran Program is sponsored by the VA Department of Research. The researchers use genetic, health, lifestyle, and military background information to better understand how genes affect health and illnesses. This research is helping healthcare providers offer better preventative care and treatments. For more information, Veterans can go to [mvp.va.gov](http://mvp.va.gov).

The VA ECHCS PTSD Unit update....the design has been completed, the funding has been approved and it should be on the streets soon to get bids. Meanwhile, PTSD Veterans will continue to receive care at our currently PTSD Unit located at Clermont.



The replica Honor Bell has found a new permanent home at the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC on 8 November. The life-sized model was created by the newly formed Honor Bell Foundation as a visual representation of how the finished bell would appear once cast. The model toured Colorado for nearly a year demonstrating its uniqueness, vision, and scale. The prototype was retired in 2018. The replica can be found in the Concourse at RMR near the Business Office; across from Kiosk 1.

Khristie Barker, MBA  
Public Affairs, Community Outreach



DOD Services to be available to eligible VA service-connected veterans and their family members.

According to the Department of Defense, starting Jan. 1, 2020, all service-connected Veterans, Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war (POW), and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible Veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) can use commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online.

For more information regarding these privileges and access to military installations, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/expanding-access>

#### Who is eligible Jan. 1, 2020?

- Veterans
- Purple Heart recipients
- former prisoners of war
- Veterans with 0-90% service-connected disability ratings

*(For former service members who have not yet sought disability compensation from VA, visit <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/>)*

- Medal of Honor recipients and Veterans with 100% service-connected disability ratings are already eligible under existing DOD policy.
- Caregivers

On Jan. 1, individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the PCAFC will be eligible for these privileges. For information about primary family caregivers in the PCAFC, visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>.

#### Required credentials.

- Veterans

On Jan. 1, Veterans eligible solely under this act who are eligible to obtain a Veteran Health Identification Card must use this credential for in-person installa-

#### Certificate of Appreciation

Patti Sampers accepting a Department of Veteran Affairs Certificate of Appreciation for the Gold Star Wives of Colorado from UVC 1st Vice President Dick Young. David Francavilla, VA Experience Office was present but not in the photo.



tion and privilege access. The card must display the Veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED). Apply here: <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic/index.asp>.

- Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enroll in VA health care, or who are enrolled in VA health care, but do not possess a Veteran Health Identification Card will not have access to DoD and Coast Guard installations for in-person commissary, exchange, and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel.
- Medal of Honor recipients and Veterans with 100% service-connected disability ratings are eligible for DoD credentials under DoD policy.
- Caregivers
- Eligible caregivers will receive an eligibility letter from VA's Office of Community Care.

If you are a primary family caregiver under the PCAFC and lose your eligibility letter, please call 1-877-733-7927 to request a replacement. Please allow two weeks for processing.

### Pikes Peak Region Seeks New Veterans Community Living Center

Nicole de Naray, the spouse of a veteran with a service-connected disability resulting from Agent Orange exposure in Viet Nam, reported on an initiative to secure a long-term care facility for veterans in the Pikes Peak Region. The planned VCLC will be a 180-bed facility and will be a public private partnership. This initiative is supported by a needs study and has potential sponsors in the state legislature. A location has been identified, and talks are underway with the owners of the property. The all-in cost is anticipated to be \$100M and would require a \$35M commitment from the state which would be matched by \$65M from the federal government. Anticipated opening will be in 2025. ■

### Community Living Centers Celebrate Veterans Veterans Day with two Poignant Ceremonies

Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center at Florence hosted a Veterans Day remembrance event on 11/11/19 at 11am. Throughout the country, veteran recognition events begin on the 11th month, 11th day at 11am to honor the yearly anniversary of the ending of WWI. This year marked the 101st Anniversary of the ending of the war.



*Attendees at the Veterans Day ceremony at Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center at Florence gather to honor veterans. The POW/MIA remembrance table is in the foreground.*

Community members, veterans' organizations, families, veterans and staff at Bruce McCandless gathered to pay tribute to veterans who currently live at work at the well-known veteran's home.

The two residents being recognized were Army veteran David Burton and Navy Veteran Deborah Cummings. >

Both received an honorary wood carved plaque with the crest of their branch of service. Office of Community Access and Independence Director, Yolanda Webb was the keynote speaker. Her moving and heartfelt speech received a standing ovation from attendees.

On Tuesday November 12, 2019, several female veterans from throughout the Metro Area met at Veterans Community Living Center at Fitzsimons to pay tribute to female veterans at the Inaugural Female Veteran Recognition Tea. Both active duty servicewomen and veterans enjoyed tea, refreshments and a visit from Lieutenant Governor, Dianne Primavera.

The Lieutenant Governor spoke about the sacrifices our female veterans make daily. She commended the bravery and commitment our veterans have faced throughout their lives.



*Lieutenant Governor Dianne Primavera speaks to a female veteran at the Female Veteran Recognition Tea.*

The audience heard stories of honor, bravery and dedication. Female veterans from all eras were invited to speak and provide a few stories from their military service. From Active Duty veterans currently stationed at Buckley to retired Vietnam Critical care nurses,

One attendee stated, "After high school, several of my friends and I decided we would join the military together. We went down to the recruiting station and i was the only one who passed the test. I joined the military shortly after. That was over 60 years ago." ■

# FYI Miscellaneous

## UVC Foundation Board Update

Following the resignation of Ron Huntley, foundation president, Ed Aitkens was elected to serve as his replacement. Ed had been serving on the foundation board as the representative of the UVC where he will continue to serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP. The current foundation board is as follows:

Ed Aitken President, Ralph Charlip Secretary/  
Treasurer, Bill Hanna, Bill Holen, Karen Hone, Mark Lilevjen

## December Meetings

UVC General Membership Meeting

8:30 AM Networking 9:00 AM Meeting starts  
Tuesday, December 10, 2019  
VFW Post 9644 2680 W. Hampden Ave.  
Englewood 80110

State Legislative Committee Mtg  
9:00 AM Tuesday, December 17, 2019  
American Legion Post #1 5400 E Yale Ave.  
Denver 80222

Executive Committee Mtg  
10:30 AM Tuesday, December 17, 2019  
American Legion Post #1 5400 E Yale Ave.  
Denver 80222

## SAVE THE DATE

**UVC AWARDS BANQUET  
SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2020**

**Renaissance Hotel, 3801 Quebec St., Denver**

**Banquet Registration forms as well as  
Banquet Sponsorship forms are available at  
the UVC website [uvcoc.org](http://uvcoc.org).**

## Significant days and observances for the United States Armed Forces

### December

December 1, 2019  
Civil Air Patrol (USAF Auxiliary) Birthday

December 7, 2019  
Pearl Harbor Day  
Called "A day which will live in infamy" by Franklin  
D. Roosevelt - On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked  
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. [Learn more...](#)

December 13, 2019  
National Guard Birthday

December 14, 2019  
National Wreaths Across America  
An annual laying of wreaths at veterans cemeteries  
across the nation.