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*The Newspaper for Veterans and All Who Love Them.*

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## STAND AT EASE By Don Stark, Publisher / Sales Manager

Having spent the last fourteen months at the helm of Sales, and Publishing the last two editions, I am reminded how really necessary it is to support the many Veterans and interested businesses helping us! I never want to forget how important these entities are to the health and well-being of our newspaper! These individuals and businesses help keep our Veteran readership informed and entertained.

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Donald C. Stark, publisher

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VOLUME 11 NUMBER 5

*The Newspaper for Veterans and All Who Love Them.*

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#### Editorial Statement

DD214 Chronicle is committed to its readers: Veterans of every generation and all who love them. The printed newspaper is delivered across northern Ohio without charge to more than 500 locations: libraries, colleges and universities that welcome veteran students, VFW and American Legion posts, city halls, Veteran Administration offices and health care facilities, organizations in support of veterans, advertisers, political offices, and Veteran Service Commissions. DD214 Chronicle also maintains dd214chronicle.com and DD214 Chronicle/Facebook.

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# Wounded Heroes Documentary Helps Distraught War Vets Over the Loss of Afghanistan to the Taliban

**Released by Gier Productions, LLC, the *Wounded Heroes* documentary features successful alternative non-drug treatments and programs that heal the wounds of Post-Traumatic Stress.**

Outrage is being expressed by many war vets at the loss of Afghanistan just before the 20th anniversary of 9-11. For some, it's a trigger making their battle with Post-Traumatic Stress even more difficult.

An alarming statistic by the Department of Veterans Affairs reports anywhere from 17 to 22 veteran suicides every single day and the last thing that's needed is even more stress for those battling PTS.

*Wounded Heroes*, an award-winning documentary directed/produced by filmmaker Michael Gier and released by Gier Productions, LLC, is a three-year passion project and features successful alternative treatments that give anyone battling PTS their lives back.

Gier says, "Many battling Post-Traumatic Stress believe that it's a "life sentence" but that's not true. The film features Veterans that had lost hope but now have their lives back. They went from contemplating suicide to living happy fulfilling lives."

"I feel alive again, I feel rejuvenated, I feel like a soldier again." - Kyle Green, US Army 1998 - 2008

"I'm happier today than I've ever been in my entire life." - Chuck Gardea, US Air Force 1989 - 2015, Firefighter/Paramedic 1998 - 2015

"I didn't even know this kind of happiness was possible." - Sherri Waters, US Army

Dr. Shauna Springer, Ph.D., known as "Doc Springer" in the military community, is a best-selling author and one of the nation's leading experts on trauma and military transition. She has become a trusted Doc to countless warfighters across the country and has gained the respect of warriors of all ranks. Her unique role has given her a deep understanding of warrior culture, and the warfighter.

"The Taliban takeover has thrust many service members into intense grief, and private mental warfare as they wonder if their service

counted, if the sacrifice of people they loved was all for nothing, and some are expressing urgent fear about those we left behind," said Dr. Springer.

The film not only features successful alternative treatments, but it also features steps for success. Gier says, "First, try the treatment option that's most appealing to you and then following up with other treatment options because they work well in combination. Second, find likeminded people that have your back; don't fight this battle alone. Third, it's vital to find a new mission; a purpose bigger

than yourself."

With the stresses of Covid, civil unrest, a divided country, and now the loss of Afghanistan to the Taliban, it's time to help people heal. *Wounded Heroes* is a film that

features solutions, not only for Veterans, but also for police officers, firefighters, doctors, nurses, and anyone battling PTS.

*Wounded Heroes* is available on Amazon, iTunes, Google Play, VUDU, YouTube Movies, Roku, and Vimeo On Demand.

The "Sponsor a Hero" program gives people the opportunity to purchase screenings that are then given to heroes at no cost. It's a great way for people to pay it forward as a thank you in appreciation for all they do.

Visit [WoundedHeroesDocumentary.com](http://WoundedHeroesDocumentary.com) to get more details about the Sponsor a Hero program, watch the trailer, film excerpts, press interviews, and more.

*The Wounded Heroes* documentary is the passion project of Michael Gier, an award-winning director/producer. Through his company Gier Productions, LLC he's directed/produced hundreds of TV commercials, corporate videos, short films, feature films and documentaries. Michael's next project is a documentary titled "Healing the Heroes of 9-11." The film will be released on 9-11 in honor of the 20th anniversary.



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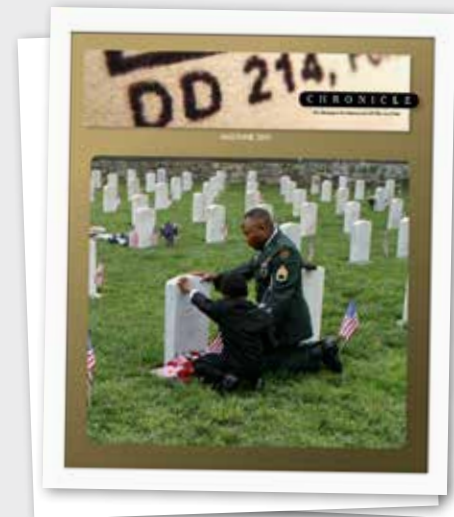
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While he was a student at the University of Oregon, Bryan Hader volunteered at a memorial service for Americans killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. "I had the honor to read the names of the Navy SEAL and Special Forces members that perished during Operation Red Wings," Hader recalled.



In this 2009 snapshot, Bryan Hader enjoys a stroll on Coronado Beach.



Bryan Hader participated in a 2008 humanitarian mission to Guatemala, El Salvador and Peru. In these photos, people in Lima, Peru patiently wait for help with vision, dental and medical problems.

# Navy Vet Stayed the Course to Cyber Security Career

by Jerri Donohue

**N**avy veteran Bryan Hader's preparation for BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolitions) ultimately helped him stick with Cuyahoga Community College's program in a completely different field - cybersecurity. Hader is still benefitting from the mental toughness he acquired as an applicant for the SEALs.

"When things get tough, I can tell that little voice in my head to shut up," Hader says now. "That applies to a lot of things in life - studies, relationships."

Tools such as visualization helped him meet the challenge of returning to college in his 30s. Hader graduated from Tri-C in May 2020 with an Associate of Applied Business in Cybersecurity. By then, he was already working full time for Hyland, a software company based in Westlake. Hader had landed an entry-level position there after attending one of Tri-C's job fairs, and later moved to a spot on Hyland's cybersecurity team.

Cybersecurity didn't figure in his plans when he enlisted in the Navy in 2006, with a hunger to see the world. The Navy transformed Hader into an Information

Systems Tech, 2nd Class, whose duties included handling network operations, and server and email administration aboard the *USS Boxer* LHD-4. His travels included stops in Singapore and India before the ship ferried 2,000 Marines to Kuwait for deployment in the Persian Gulf.

"Then we pulled security," Hader said. "We bounced from Manama, Bahrain to Dubai, United Arab Emirates."

The *USS Boxer* eventually transported the same group of Marines home to the States, with a liberty in Perth, Australia.

Back in San Diego, barracks became the sailor's quarters.

"When we're in home port, you travel to work just as you would to any other job," Hader said. "Except my building was a ship."

That ship sailed military and volunteer civilian doctors to Peru, El Salvador and Guatemala for a 2-month humanitarian mission in 2008. Docking off shore, they flew to cities and remote areas to treat the vision, dental and health problems of the local populace.

Hader accompanied medical personnel to provide their telephone

and computer support. He witnessed huge crowds of people of all ages who sometimes trekked for days to receive medical assistance at improvised clinics in church courtyards.

"As we were walking in, there were lines of people and they were cheering," Hader said. "You could tell by the look on their faces they were happy and thankful."

Hader, who had applied for BUD/S, got orders to Great Lakes Naval Base in 2009. The Navy placed him on a medical "hold," however, while deciding whether to perform lasik surgery on his eyes. The ongoing delay frustrated him.

"You're doing all the training but you don't start the program," Hader said. "It's like the movie, 'Ground Hog Day.'"

After multiple examinations, Navy doctors determined Hader's corneas were too thin for the surgery. It was a crushing disappointment at the time, and the Petty Officer 2nd Class left the Navy two months after dropping out of BUD/S. He next attended the University of Oregon in Eugene full time while managing a race car shop. Hader returned to Cleveland

to be near family after earning a Bachelor of Science in Sociology.

Despite his job experience in the Navy, potential employers thought the college years had kept him away from computer work too long. Undaunted, the veteran entered the cybersecurity program Tri-C had recently introduced. Not only did he receive credits for schooling he'd undertaken in the Navy, but he used another perk for vets.

"I was able to take advantage of the Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, also known as Chapter Thirty-One," Hader said. He explained that the program, since renamed as "Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E)", is separate from the Post 9-11 GI Bill. It covered his tuition, books and housing.

Although he had to relinquish his dream of becoming a Navy SEAL, the former sailor appreciates the lessons he learned back then, and his career change.

"I'm happier in my job and where I'm at in life," he said.

"Tri-C opened these doors and opportunities."

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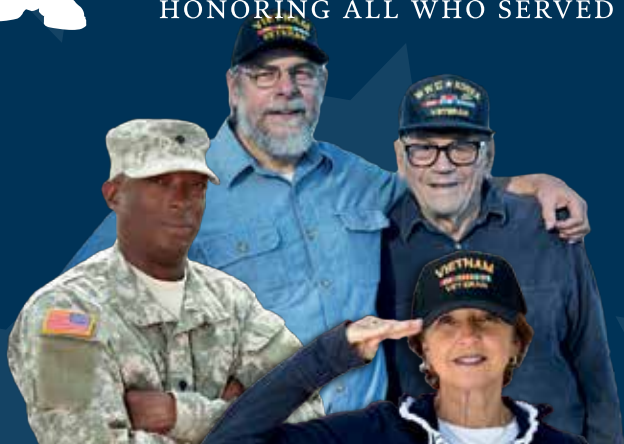
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Photo by Brian Albrecht

All of the horses at the Forever Amber Acres Animal Sanctuary in Medina had been previously abused or neglected, and many were headed for the slaughterhouse before being rescued.



Photo by Brian Albrecht

Michele Bolinger founded the Forever Amber Acres Animal Sanctuary to rescue horses that are then used in equine therapy sessions.

# Veterans, horses, meet for mutual healing

By Brian Albrecht

**T**hey met as brothers in arms. Veterans and horses, both wounded by life, recently gathered in a small Medina barn to share and heal.

Among them was John Trzop, 74, of Brunswick, a Vietnam Army vet whose days emptied with the death of his wife three years ago.

On the barn's hoof-packed dirt he met Spirit, a former race horse suffering from injuries on and off the track, severe arthritis and an anxiety disorder.

Trzop smiled. Spirit dropped his head, inviting a tender touch in a scene repeated throughout the barn with other horses and vets.

The encounters are part of the Veteran Equine Therapy Services (VETS) program at the nonprofit Forever Amber Acres Animal Sanctuary, which has offered the free service to more than 200 vets during the past three years.

The program addresses post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anger, anxiety, relationship and communication difficulties, emotional problems and other issues, using the principles of equine-assisted psychotherapy.

Michele Bolinger, founder of Forever Amber Acres, said she started VETS because of family members who served in the military and a former boyfriend who was traumatized from his experiences in the Gulf War.

"So this (VETS) is my way of giving back to veterans, helping to repair their lives, and help their family members," she said.

Bolinger started the sanctuary in 2008 to provide refuge, rehabilitation and retirement aftercare for special needs horses and other animals, utilizing them in programs to aid veterans, children, families and seniors dealing with physical and

emotional challenges.

The 11 acres sanctuary, named for the first horse that Bolinger rescued, relies solely on sponsors and donations.

After her divorce and losing her parents, Bolinger said she realized the healing power of horses.

"All of these horses (seven now) have been abused, neglected, or have medical or mental disabilities," she said.

However, these same disadvantages "make them more in tune with people suffering from trauma," she noted.

"Like veterans, horses are acutely aware of all their surroundings," said Bolinger, an equine therapy specialist. "You can't hide your emotions from horses. They naturally mirror what's going on with individuals."

"Through the horses we can

uncover so much more and really get to the heart of what's going on with people."

The horses are not ridden, due to their own physical, mental or emotional problems. But they do participate in activities with the vets, such as walking, traversing modest obstacle courses and trust exercises.

In one recent exercise as rain poured outside the barn like life's troubles, the veterans sat in a circle, joined by horses lending silent support. "Did you ever need to be in somebody's presence, but don't necessarily need someone talking to you or touching you? You just need someone to just be there for you," Bolinger told the vets.

Janna Le TenHuisen, a Medina County licensed therapist in private practice who has worked with the VETS program since early 2020,

*Continued on next page*

Continued from previous page said it's one of the "most powerful" forms of therapy she's seen in her 25 years of practice.

"Horses are very intuitive animals. They are nonjudgmental and accepting, and they can connect with veterans and bring out the veterans' stories in a way that we humans can't," she said.

In traditional therapy some vets can find it overwhelming to tell their story over and over again, she said. But with a horse "they can come to some sort of resolution and not have to go into details," she noted. "I can't explain how or why it happens, but it does, time and time again."

Both she and Bolinger remembered one veteran who initially insisted everything was fine with him. But each time he made that assertion, a horse named Sage would move between him and the therapists. Only when the vet conceded to having problems did the horse move away, and afterward became jokingly called "the guardian of secrets."

Navy vet Jennifer Floyd, 39, of Barberton, who started as a Forever Amber volunteer three years ago, said the horses "can sense your emotions. They're kind-of a mirror. Whatever you're feeling inside is what they project back. You can't lie to a horse."

"It helps relax you being around horses, gives you a good sense of purpose," she added.

That's exactly what John Trzop needed after his wife died. "I just

gave up on everything," he said. After his son found the VETS program for him, Trzop said, "it just filled a void. My life turned around. It gave me a sense of purpose.

"It's a different kind of relationship. It's like another family," said Trzop, who has become a regular volunteer at the sanctuary. "That lady (Bolinger), for what she's doing, it's phenomenal. So I'll do anything I can do to help."

Vets in the program set goals such as moving past traumatic events, building trust and relationships, and managing anger. The number of sessions needed to reach those goals varies according to a veteran's needs, Bolinger said.

That time to heal can be the hardest part of her work. "I want people to make the connections right away. But it's not my story. It's their story," she said.

Conversely, the best part of her efforts, according to Bolinger, is "just the reward of feeling like I made a difference."

And she does, in Trzop's view. "I've seen, with other veterans, there's a big difference," he said. "You see somebody come in serious, with a straight face, and after a while with the horses, they relax, they're talking more, they're laughing and they're happy."

*The Forever Amber Acres Animal Sanctuary, [www.foreveramber.org](http://www.foreveramber.org), can be contacted at [foreveramberacres@gmail.com](mailto:foreveramberacres@gmail.com); 330-618-6010; 1133 Granger Road, Medina, OH 44256.*



Photo by Brian Albrecht

Army veterans John Trzop and Elizabeth Ramos greet a horse during a recent VETS session.



Photo courtesy of Forever Amber Acres Animal Sanctuary



Photo by Brian Albrecht

Vietnam vet John Trzop shares a moment with two of the horses in a recent Veteran Equine Therapy Services (VETS) therapy session at the Forever Amber Acres Animal Sanctuary in Medina.



Photo courtesy of Forever Amber Acres Animal Sanctuary

Getting to know you works both ways when vets meet horses, both working on rehabilitation.



Photo by Brian Albrecht

Veterans and therapists sit in a circle, joined by horses, during a recent Veteran Equine Therapy Services (VETS) therapy session at the Forever Amber Acres Animal Sanctuary in Medina.

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# Olivia Rodriguez Finds Many Ways to Serve

**Tri-C's Student Veteran of the Year is passionate about helping environment, others**

Olivia Rodriguez has never taken the easy way out. It's why the 21-year-old Lakewood resident is now a Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) graduate and recipient of the 2020 Tri-C Student Veteran of the Year award.

After graduating from Lakewood High School three years ago, Rodriguez already had a plan for her future. She entered the U.S. Army Reserve, attending basic training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. After basic training, she had to pick an area of specialization.

Her choice? Combat medic.

"It was tougher, a little more of a challenge," Rodriguez said. "I like the idea of helping people, and I wanted something a little more hands-on compared to some of the other options I had."

After attending combat-medic training at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, Rodriguez came home in April 2018 to be stationed with the 371st Minimal Care Detachment, an Army Reserve unit based in Twinsburg. Like most reservists, she attends ongoing weekend training once a month, along with a multiweek training excursion each summer.

But Rodriguez, as always, was looking for another challenge. In addition to serving her country, she wanted to use her time in the reserve to advance her education. She enrolled at Tri-C in fall 2018, attending classes at the Westshore Campus in Westlake.

"Being with a reserve unit, you have to choose schools and workplaces that allow you to be easily available if needed," Rodriguez said. "That was part of the appeal of Tri-C. It was close to home and close to my unit. I was able to serve, able to go to school, and able to explore different career tracks and discover new interests."

## Finding a purpose

During her time at Tri-C, Rodriguez became interested in



**"If you come to Tri-C as a veteran and are motivated to put in the work, they will give you the support you need to be successful"**

— Olivia Rodriguez

sustainability, environmental issues and solving food-scarcity problems for underserved populations.

"In my first English class at Tri-C, the professor had us write an essay about food and the topics surrounding it," she said. "That's what really got me thinking about food scarcity, particularly in American cities, where we should never have problems like that."

She began learning about the connection between the food supply and responsible treatment of the environment. Seeing an opportunity to involve faculty and other students, she spearheaded the formation of the Westshore Campus Environmental Club, serving as its president.

Already situated within a natural habitat that serves as an outdoor

classroom, the campus provided an ideal setting to launch an environmental club.

"There were a number of others at the campus who encouraged me," she said. "From the time we formed in December 2018, we helped on a lot of different projects. We planted native flowers around the campus, we were able to get a solar-panel bench with electrical outlets for charging phones, and we promoted beach cleanups at Lake Erie. We also had projects planned for this past spring, but COVID ended most of that."

Rodriguez was involved in many other activities while at Tri-C, including Phi Theta Kappa, the Honors Program and a work-study position funded by the College's Veteran Services program. That's

on top of her achievements with the Army Reserve, including certification as an emergency medical technician and receiving the Army Achievement Medal for her leadership during training.

## Student Veteran of the Year

Rodriguez graduated from Tri-C with an Associate of Science degree this past spring. But her willingness to lead and constant desire to seek out new challenges left a lasting impact on the Westshore Campus. For her work, vision and leadership, she was named the 2020 Tri-C Student Veteran of the Year in October.

For Rodriguez, it is a great personal honor. But it's more than that—it demonstrates the opportunities Tri-C offers to active military and veterans looking to further their education.

"It's a symbol of the hard work I've put in, but it also shows how much Tri-C supports veterans and military in the community," she said. "If you come to Tri-C as a veteran and are motivated to put in the work, they will give you the support you need to be successful—socially, academically and financially. There are so many programs you can choose from to help you accomplish your goals."

With associate degree in hand, Rodriguez is embarking on a new journey at Loyola University Chicago. She originally planned to move to the city for the start of the fall semester, but COVID-19 restrictions have kept her in Cleveland, taking classes online.

"I'm pursuing a bachelor's degree in environmental science with a focus on food systems and sustainable agriculture," she said. "I want to work for an organization or non-profit that addresses food scarcity problems. That's one area where I really want to make a difference."

Rodriguez aims to graduate from Loyola Chicago in 2022, and she is scheduled to be discharged from the Army Reserve in 2023.



# Army nurse voices veterans' World of Hurt

By Nancy Peacock, Book Editor

**F**ifty years ago, a 23-year-old Army nurse began her one-year tour of duty at the 24th Evacuation Hospital on Long Binh Post in Vietnam. Upon landing at the Bien Hoa Air Force Base, Mary Reynolds Powell's initial reaction was like so many others: "Oh-h-h shit ... What have I gotten myself into?"

So began the life-changing experience that turned Powell from a recent nursing school graduate into a seasoned caregiver for what seemed like an endless supply of sick, wounded and dying soldiers. It took another 33 years for her to record those experiences in *A World of Hurt: Between Innocence and Arrogance in Vietnam* (Greenleaf Books, 2003).

The memoir's title comes from an epiphany Powell had in 1990 during a conference about the war. While veterans were still grappling with the devastating effects of their service, some military officials were still spouting the official perspective. After one such speech at the conference, Powell had heard enough.

"I raised my hand and said I was an Army nurse in Vietnam," she remembered. "I told him 'You have spun an image of generals with no mission, no direction and no support. Yet you sent three million men into a meat grinder.'"

By the end of the conference,

**The memoir's title comes from an epiphany Powell had during a 1990 conference about the war. While veterans were grappling with the devastating effects of their service, some of the brass were still spouting the official perspective. After one such speech, Powell had heard enough.**

Powell said she knew she wanted to write a book about the war from different points of view.

"I knew it couldn't be my story alone," she said. "It had to include lifers in the military, people from other parts of the country, other backgrounds, to demonstrate that in 1971, at that point in time, we were all in the same muck."

Powell set about interviewing and recording the experiences of seven friends who served with her: Stephanie, an Army nurse from Mississippi; Chris, a corpsman from Michigan; John, a helicopter pilot; Terry, a lieutenant platoon leader; Frank, a colonel cardiologist and commander of the 17th Field Hospital at An Khe; Son, a Vietnamese orderly with the internal medicine staff at the 24th Evac; and Doug, a preventive medicine officer/pediatrician who became

her husband.

Their stories weave a compelling narrative of the humanity and the insanity of the war's legacy. From Powell's observations, between the time the Marines first landed in March of 1965 until April of 1975, Vietnam was not one but three very different experiences.

"If you were there in the first period, the soldiers had been raised in the Cold War and they were there to defend liberty," she said. "The soldiers who were there from 1967 to 1969, they really got it from every direction. Half of the panels of the dead on the DC Vietnam Memorial came from those years."

The last phase of the war, from 1969 until the end, included Powell's tour of duty from 1970-71.

"We knew it was winding down," she said. "We also knew that the peace negotiators in Paris couldn't

even agree on the size and the shape of the table. And yet there were guys out there in the bush, still getting injured and killed. And the guys knew it."

Having survived a war that was unpopular, and in some cases not even officially considered a "real war," veterans are still processing the loss, sadness and pain that came with the experience. Recently, a veteran confided to Powell that his memories are getting stronger and harder to deal with. When she asked him if he had been to the VA for therapy, the veteran said a counselor told him, "You don't have PTSD. You're just a caring person."

Having a husband who experienced the war at the same time created a support system for Powell that many veterans never had.

"The human, caring connection allowed me to survive the experience," Powell said. "It wasn't just that the two of us could process what happened. We've been able to do that for 50 years."

Powell predicts the veterans of Afghanistan will struggle with additional conflicting feelings. Many served multiple tours, and without a draft they enlisted for altruistic reasons.

"That's a whole lot of stuff to work your way through," she said. "They have to feel totally abandoned. They are going to take a long time to process it."

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# Dear Veterans,

Author Unknown

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the sacrifices you've made  
both in times of peace and of war.

We will never fully understand  
what you were required to do  
or how you were able to do it.

We will never fully understand  
the depth of your scars.

But what we can offer you is this:

We see you.

We recognize your humanity.

And we send you love that is gentle, patient and healing.

With Blessings and Gratitude,

we ask that you remember you are loved.

# pain

Diana P Congdon APRN

War never leaves the Soldier

It's branded in the Psyche

Music, sights, sounds, smells, news

Trigger sensations, Trigger images, and instantly

War is alive again

Haunting the daylight, Haunting the dream world

The fatigues, the boot, the helmet

They're in place again

But they're invisible and beyond comprehension  
for those who weren't there

The wounds never left. They never healed.

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for a Proclamation by Mayor Paul Adamson and  
recognition of Purple Heart recipients and their families.

New Franklin City Hall  
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## VA expands rental support, increasing housing options for Veterans

**WASHINGTON** — The Dept. of Veterans Affairs has expanded the Shallow Subsidy initiative and will grant \$200 million to 238 nonprofit organizations across the country and territories to provide housing rental assistance to extremely and very low-income Veteran households eligible under VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families program.

The initiative funded by The American Rescue Plan, is now available in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam and promotes long-term housing stability by providing rental assistance payments directly to landlords on behalf of eligible Veteran households for up to two years.

"VA's Shallow Subsidy initiative is a vital tool in addressing the widening gap between incomes and rising housing costs," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "The recent expansion enables VA to provide relief to many more Veterans burdened by high housing rental costs while they attempt to increase their

incomes by pursuing training or better employment opportunities."

The SSVF Shallow Subsidy initiative covers 35% of eligible Veterans' rent for two years without the risk of the subsidy decreasing if the Veteran's income increases during the two-year period. The purpose is to incentivize Veterans to increase their income through employment or other means. The initiative also works closely with the Labor Department's Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program to help Veterans secure employment.

There are 7.2 million more affordable housing units needed for low-income families according to data published by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, highlighting the need for this VA initiative, particularly in communities with high rental costs and low housing rental vacancy rates.

The Shallow Subsidy initiative aligns with the White House's priority to promote housing stability by supporting vulnerable tenants and preventing foreclosures.



# FREEDOM WALKS

*The NEOPAT Freedom Walks concept was created to help community members raise awareness and funds for NEOPAT so we may continue in our mission to Keep The Promise to honor and remember our veterans and support military families in Northeast Ohio.*



NEOPAT Freedom Walks are designed to allow you to create a team of walkers that will walk in honor of your story.

Whether you are walking in memory of a hero, are a current veteran, have a veteran in your family you wish to acknowledge or you are a patriot wanting to give back to the men and women that sacrifice for our freedoms, the NEOPAT Freedom Walks will bring your community together.

NEOPAT Freedom Walks are fun, promote a healthy activity to involve many individuals and a variety of ages and can easily be connected to the NEOPAT mission.

- There is no registration fee.
- We ask that each walker raise a minimum of \$50.
- Each team that registers and raises their minimum per walker before the walk, will each be given commemorative NEOPAT Freedom Walks T-shirts to wear while walking.
- Best of all, it's easy for you to begin and **100% of every dollar raised goes directly to our mission!**

[neopat.org/events/freedom-walks](https://neopat.org/events/freedom-walks)



# My Introduction to the West Side Irish American Club

by JC Sullivan

**I**t was in a PX at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Lo and behold, there was my St. Vincent de Paul grade school friend, Pie O'Malley himself. Before I proceed with the story; a side note is needed. Pat's brother Jim caught an undiagnosed sickness that was later thought to have been Polio. In Ireland Patrick is pronounced Patty. As a result, Jimmy could never say Pat properly, so it came out "Pie" and the nickname stuck. Now to the rest of the story.

Over beers in the PX that day Pie asked me if I'd ever been to the West Side Irish American Club. My mother was an Irish Catholic belle from "Portland", the Irish section of Louisville. My dad had met her at a USO Dance when he was an Army engineer at Fort Knox on temporary duty. His family was east side Irish. As a result, our family was not connected to the Irish community in Cleveland. "When you go in to the Club," Pie said, "the girls will be all seated on one side of the room and the boys on the opposite. And you can have a drink on Sunday in the back."

That may sound funny to younger readers but the "Blue Laws" ruled back then and, businesses, including Cleveland bars, were closed on Sundays. The only exceptions were private clubs, like the WSIA.

While home on leave after that I made a Sunday trip to the Club when it was on Madison Avenue. Sure enough, it was just as Pie described, with the sexes self-separated. I checked out the ladies as I ambled to the door in the back.

As I began to enter a tall fella with an Irish brogue asked me where I thought I was going. "I'm going back to have a drink at the bar," I replied.

Are you a member?

No.

Well you have to be a member to go in.

I'm sorry, I'm home on leave from the Army. This is my first time here.

Oh you're in the Army? Well, that's a different story. Go on in.

As your older readers will recognize, the tall fella was the late Pat Lynch, a Mayoman. He was also a WWI Army veteran who'd served with New York's famed "Rainbow

Division", with the Fighting 69th. He, like my late Uncle John Francis Adams from Cleveland, suffered from the effects of German Gas (while Uncle John served with the 37th Buckeye Division) in France.

After I left the Army and returned home to Cleveland I went often to the WSIA on Sundays for a number of years, never paying any dues... until a new stalwart manned the entry door to the bar, or should I say 'womanned' the entry door—Helen Malloy. She put a stop to my free membership and I had to begin to cough up dues annually.

When I see Helen I remind her of this story and how she put a stop to my illegitimacy. Also, if you happen to run into Pie, don't believe his

story about how he saved my life from a fight with another soldier who happened to be a Golden Glove fighter from Detroit. I hereby state I haven't any recollection of the alleged event.

*Sullivan is an internationally-published writer with credits in the Mayo News, Western People, Irish America Magazine, Irish Echo Newspaper and others*

*too numerous to mention. He is a contributor to [www.dd214chronicle.com](http://www.dd214chronicle.com) a veterans newspaper serving northeast Ohio.*



Source: wsia-club.org

## VA to start processing disability claims for certain conditions related to particulate matter

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs will begin processing disability claims Aug. 2 for asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis on a presumptive basis based on presumed particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas—if these conditions manifested within 10 years of a qualifying period of military service.

VA conducted the first iteration of a newly formed internal VA process to review scientific evidence to support rulemaking, resulting in the recommendation to consider creation of new presumptions of service connection for respiratory conditions based on VA's evaluation of a National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine report and other evidence.

The process concluded that particulate matter pollution is associated with chronic asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis for Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations beginning Aug. 2, 1990 to the present, or Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria or Djibouti beginning Sept. 19, 2001 to the present. VA's review also concluded that there was sufficient evidence to presume that these Veterans have been exposed to particulate matter.

"I announced my intent to initiate rulemaking on May 27 to consider adding respiratory conditions to the list of chronic disabilities," said Denis McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Af-

fairs. "Through this process I determined that the evidence provided was sufficient to establish presumptions of service connection for these three respiratory conditions. This is the right decision, and VA will continue to use a holistic approach in determining toxic exposure presumptions moving forward."

The Southwest Asia theater of operations refers to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the airspace above these locations.

VA will conduct outreach to impacted Veterans and survivors to inform them about their eligibility and will provide information on how to apply. Veterans and survivors who believe they may be eligible for the newly established presumptive conditions are encouraged to apply. They should file a VA Form 21-526EZ if applying for the first time or a VA Form 20-0995 if they are reapplying for these conditions. For more information on the new presumptive conditions, visit our website at Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures - Public Health ([va.gov](http://va.gov)).

To apply for benefits, Veterans and survivors may visit [VA.gov](http://VA.gov) or call toll-free at 800-827-1000. Within the next week, you can view the interim final rule at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

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# Resources for Veterans:

**Reconciling Your Service** - With the news of Afghanistan this August, listen to the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman talk about how Afghanistan Vets can reconcile their service: <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/92631/afghanistan-how-veterans-can-reconcile-service/>

**Stories of Help** - Hear how these Veterans reached out for support to help address a mental health concern. If you're thinking about getting help, it's time to learn about the many services and programs available through VA. It's never too late to get the help you deserve. <https://youtu.be/baCPRpEcxVM>

- Social withdrawal and isolation can have negative effects on a Veteran's life. Hear Veterans describe how they found support and coping tools to help overcome feelings of isolation. <https://youtu.be/-K9whgraAqk>

- The news of Afghanistan can trigger a complicated wave of emotions. Read how Veterans can get help through Vet Centers, learning from Vietnam Veterans. <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/92731/afghanistan-how-veterans-can-learn-from-vietnam-veterans/>

**Veterans Crisis Line** - If you are having thoughts of suicide, call 1-800-273-8255, then PRESS 1 or visit [veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net)

- For emergency mental health care, you can also go directly to your local VA medical center 24/7 regardless of your discharge status or enrollment in other VA health care.

**PTSD Treatment Works** - PTSD: National Center for PTSD ([va.gov](http://va.gov))

**Vet Centers** - Discuss how you feel with other Veterans in these community-based counseling centers. **70% of Vet Center staff are Veterans.** Call 1-877-927-8387

**VA Mental Health Services Guide** - This guide will help you sign up and access mental health services. [va.gov/files/2020-11/mental-health-quick-start-guide.pdf](http://va.gov/files/2020-11/mental-health-quick-start-guide.pdf)

**MakeTheConnection.net** - information, resources, and Veteran to Veteran videos for challenging life events and experiences with mental health issues.

**RallyPoint** - Talk to other Veterans online. Discuss: What are your feelings as the Taliban reclaim Afghanistan after 20 years of US involvement? [rallypoint.com](http://rallypoint.com)

**Download VA's self-help apps** - Tools to help deal with common reactions like, stress, sadness, and anxiety. You can also track your symptoms over time. [ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile](http://ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile)

**Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)** - Request a Peer Mentor [taps.org/requestapeermentor](http://taps.org/requestapeermentor)

**VA Women Veterans Call Center** - Call or text 1-855-829-6636 (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 6:30PM ET)

**VA Caregiver Support Line** - Call 1-855-260-3274 (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 5PM ET)

**Together We Served** - Find your battle buddies through unit pages [blogs.va.gov/VAntage/73552/together-served-provides-virtual-base-connecting-veterans](https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/73552/together-served-provides-virtual-base-connecting-veterans)

**George W. Bush Institute** - Need help or want to talk? Call: 1-630-522-4904 or email: [checkin@veteranwellnessalliance.org](mailto:checkin@veteranwellnessalliance.org)

**Elizabeth Dole Foundation Hidden Heroes** - Join the Community [hiddenheroes.org](http://hiddenheroes.org)

**American Red Cross Military Veteran Caregiver Network** - Peer Support and Mentoring [redcross.org/get-help/military-families/services-for-veterans/military-veteran-caregiver-network.html](http://redcross.org/get-help/military-families/services-for-veterans/military-veteran-caregiver-network.html)

**Team Red, White & Blue** - Hundreds of events weekly. Find a chapter in your area. [teamrwb.org](http://teamrwb.org)

**Student Veterans of America** - Find a campus chapter to connect with. [studentveterans.org](http://studentveterans.org)

**Team Rubicon** - Find a local support squad. [teamrubiconusa.org/support-squad](http://teamrubiconusa.org/support-squad)



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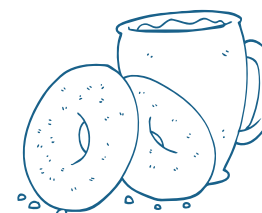
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## VISION '21 CAMPAIGN

Dear Veterans / DD214 Chronicle Readers

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Just over a decade old, the Foundation is an independent alliance of business and civic leaders, law enforcement organizations, and individuals and families like you and yours committed to the ideal that an educated, well-trained, and modernly equipped law enforcement agency leads to a safer community.

**The Cleveland Police Foundation is making a difference.** We have been quietly working proactively by **investing in and implementing innovative community policing initiatives** and engagement activities and events that foster stronger relations to build bridges between citizens and police officers.



Defunding police is NOT the answer. The Foundation's continuous investment in proven strategies and programs is working. The result is bringing citizens and law enforcement together to resolve issues and encouraging police openness to reform through cultural transformation.

We have launched the **Vision '21 Campaign** to enlist the involvement and financial support of citizens and businesses across the region to help fund investment in six critically important areas:

- 1. Implement "cultural transformation"** in each of the Cleveland Police Districts across the city. With your help we can build on the success of the pilot program implemented in District 4 that improved internal relationships and operations and helps police officers to be more empathetic and culturally responsive to the communities and neighborhoods they serve.
- 2. Introduce technology** to support human efforts, in order to fight crime in the city's neighborhoods to save lives and track down perpetrators. **Shot-spotter technology** has been installed in a high crime area to pinpoint the location of gun shots via sensitive audio equipment, enabling rapid response. Recently four lives have been saved.
- 3. Enhance demographic and gender diversity with CPD** through initiatives like the Foundation's acclaimed "Safety Career Pipeline Program" that engages high school students in underserved areas to equip them with the skills in preparation for successful careers in public safety. The program enables students to close the gap between graduation and the eligibility age to apply for opportunities and thus creates a "pipeline" of qualified candidates.
- 4. Expand opportunities for interaction between police officers and citizens** through enhanced "Community Policing" events including the annual "Fishing with Cops" event that draws hundreds of kids to experience the lake, often for the first time, and Christmas activities.
- 5. Increase the capacity of Cleveland Police Charities** including PAL, Cops for Kids, Mounted Unit, Pipes & Drums Corps, and the Police Historical Museum to better support Community Policing efforts.
- 6. Support** the welfare and mental health of Cleveland Police officers who face incredibly stressful circumstances in pursuit of their duties. The "Heroes Fund" assists families of officers killed in the line of duty, and officers with duty-related health issues.

Please use this form with your check made payable to the *Cleveland Police Foundation*. and mail your payment to Cleveland Police Foundation, 2301 Payne Ave., Suite 201, Cleveland, OH 44114. Thank you for your support!

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### INDIVIDUAL / FAMILY / SMALL BUSINESS

#### Patrol Officer – \$50 (Individual)

Membership Card and Frameable Certificate  
 Lapel Pin, Window Decal, and T-Shirt  
 Link / Partner Newsletter  
 Safety Booklet  
 Annual Report / Website Listing

#### Sergeant – \$75 (Add Spouse)

One – Frameable Certificate  
 Two – Membership Cards, Lapel Pins, Decals, and T-Shirts  
 Link / Partner Newsletter  
 Safety Booklet / Listings

#### Lieutenant – \$150 (Family)

Four – Membership Cards, Lapel Pins, Decals, and T-Shirts  
 One – Frameable Certificate  
 Two – Safety Booklets  
 One – Calendar  
 Link – Partner Newsletter,  
 Annual Report / Web Listings

#### Captain – \$250 (Business Friend - Standard)

One – Frameable Certificate  
 Four – Membership Cards, Lapel Pins, Decals, and T-Shirts  
 Two – Safety Booklets  
 Calendar / Yard Sign / Membership Poster  
 Link – Partner Newsletter,  
 Annual Report / Web Listing (Business Logo)  
 Social Media Recognition

#### Commander – \$500 (Business Friend - Premium)

One – Collectible Mini-Badge  
 Four – Membership Cards, Lapel Pins, Decals, Safety Booklets, and T-Shirts  
 Frameable Certificate  
 Two – Calendars and Yard Sign / Poster  
 Link – Partner Newsletter  
 Annual Report / Web Listing (Business Logo)  
 Social Media Recognition, and Inclusion in a News Release

#### Please Note

Some perks may be fulfilled later in the year due to supply availability.

Larger quantities of decals, Safety Booklets, calendars, lapel pins and t-shirts may be purchased if supplies are available at Foundation cost plus shipping.

Thank you!



For just pennies a day you and your family (or business) can benefit from Cleveland Police Foundation investments to improve police and community relations. Please consider making a difference by becoming a Friend of the Cleveland Police Foundation, and receive some "cool" perks in appreciation for your support. *Thank you!*

Join online at **www.clevelandpolicefoundation.org/friends** or use the tear-off form and mail in your contribution. Gifts are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Check out our website for more information at **www.clevelandpolicefoundation.org**.



Ahborson / morguefile.com

## Dominion Energy Ohio Payment Plans, Energy Assistance Programs Can Help Customers Stay Safe and Warm This Winter

**A**s the winter heating season approaches, Dominion Energy Ohio is offering customers facing financial hardship more flexible payment options on past-due balances and increased financial support for EnergyShare, our program supporting families and individuals in need. The company remains committed to providing safe, economical and reliable energy, even as the coronavirus pandemic continues to impact communities across the country.

During the period ahead, the company strongly encourages customers to take advantage of the resources being made available, chief among them more flexible payment plans. Customers can learn more by calling 1-800-362-7557. Information is also available 24/7 online at [DominionEnergy.com](http://DominionEnergy.com), search billing options & assistance.

### 1. Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Winter Reconnection Order:

The company also reminds customers of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's annual Winter Reconnection Order, which took effect October 5, earlier than usual. All residential customers, regardless of income, may avoid a shutoff or restore gas service once during the heating season, between October 5 and through April 15, 2021 by paying the lesser of:

- the entire past-due balance on your gas bill;
- the past-due payments if you are on a special payment plan;
- or \$175.

If service has been disconnected, a reconnect fee of \$33,

plus applicable taxes, will be billed to the account. Customers will be enrolled automatically in the One-Ninth Payment Plan when using the Winter Reconnection Order to help pay off any additional past-due balances. Customers may select a different plan by calling Dominion Energy Ohio.

### 2. Dominion Energy Payment Plans:

If customers are having trouble paying their bills, the company offers both short-term payment extensions and long-term payment plans to help residential and commercial customers manage their balances and catch up over time. Customers may qualify for one of several Dominion Energy or State of Ohio programs. Dominion offerings include:

- **Budget Billing** allows customers to pay a fixed budget amount each month, based on annual gas usage. Dominion Energy Ohio periodically reviews the budget amount and adjusts it, if necessary, so that the customer will not have a high balance or large credit at the end of the budget year. Customers should call the company for more information.
- **Budget Plus:** The company offers additional flexibility for customers who enroll in our Budget Plus payment plan. Under Budget Plus, we are now allowing customers to pay their budget payment, plus an amount against their past-due balance over a maximum of 12 months. Previously, the length was limited to 9 months. Please contact us to discuss whether

additional payment options may be available.

- **Current-Plus Plan:** Customers with a past-due balance can pay their current monthly bill, plus an installment of the total account balance at the time they enroll in the plan that spreads the balance over multiple months.
- The **One-Ninth Plan** allows customers to pay one-ninth of their total account balance each month plus a calculated budget amount.
- Under the **One-Third Winter Heating Plan**, customers pay one-third of their total account balance each month for bills that include gas used from November 1, 2020, through April 15, 2021.
- **Short-Term Extension** grants up to five additional days to pay before the next bill date.

**3. EnergyShare:** Dominion Energy offers direct help through EnergyShare, our program for those facing financial hardships, who have exhausted all other forms of energy assistance. The Salvation Army administers the program. EnergyShare is funded with company contributions and supplemented with donations from customers and employees. To meet continuing customer needs during the pandemic and for the upcoming winter season, the company has added \$750,000 to the program, on top of its usual **\$230,000** annual contribution and an additional donation of \$150,000 made this year.

Customers who are not eligible to participate in Ohio's Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus

(PIPP Plus) program may apply for EnergyShare assistance between October 1, 2020, and May 31, 2021, or until funds run out, to receive a maximum payment of \$800. To qualify, a customer's yearly gross household income must be at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for eligibility or the head of household is unemployed, or the applicant is experiencing financial hardship.

PIPP Plus-eligible customers may apply for EnergyShare between December 1, 2020, and May 31, 2021, or until funds run out, for a maximum payment of \$300. **Note:** PIPP Plus customers must wait to apply for HEAP November 1, to ensure this program is used as a last resort option to avoid disconnection.

Here are other important EnergyShare details:

- Participants must be Dominion Energy Ohio residential customers.
- To qualify, a customer's yearly gross household income must be at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Those income levels are \$38,280 for one person; \$51,720 for two people; \$65,160 for three; \$78,600 for four; \$92,040 for five; \$105,480 for six; \$118,920 for seven; and \$132,360 for eight. Add \$13,440 for each additional person.
- Customers may contact the Salvation Army for more information, or see if they qualify at: <https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org/>.

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**4. Dominion Energy also offers multiple no-cost or low-cost energy conservation programs to help customers lower their bills:**

- Dominion Energy Ohio's **Housewarming Program** provides weatherization assistance to help income-eligible customers reduce their energy usage. For information, call CHN Housing Partners (formerly Cleveland Housing Network), at 216-325-1149, or go to [chnhousingpartners.org/housing-and-community-services/home-energy-efficiency-services](http://chnhousingpartners.org/housing-and-community-services/home-energy-efficiency-services)
- Dominion Energy Ohio's **Home Performance with ENERGY STAR (HPwES) Program** through CLEAResult has been designed to help our residential customers improve their homes' energy efficiency. It all starts with a home energy assessment, now available for \$25, which is a 50 percent discount through October 31. Whether customers are making energy-efficient improvements to their current home or recently purchased a new home, they can benefit from having a home energy assessment.

Rebates up to \$1,250 are available for eligible improvements. Customers may call 1-877-287-3416 to schedule an assessment or visit [www.deohpwes.com](http://www.deohpwes.com) for program details and eligibility information.

**5. Government Assistance Programs:**

The following programs are available for income-eligible customers. Customers can apply for all programs with one application at [www.energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://www.energyhelp.ohio.gov), which provides income guidelines as well. Applications also are available at libraries, some banks and your local home energy assistance provider, or by calling the Ohio Development Services Agency at 1-800-282-0880. Hearing-impaired customers with Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf can call 711.

• **Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus (PIPP Plus):** To qualify for this special payment plan, developed by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, a customer's yearly gross household income can be up to 150 percent of federal poverty guidelines.

Under PIPP Plus, participating customers may maintain their natural gas service by paying

6 percent of their total gross monthly household income, or \$10, whichever is greater.

*PIPP Plus has special benefits for participating customers. Each time customers make their required PIPP Plus monthly payments in full by the due date, Dominion Energy Ohio will credit their accounts for the rest of that month's current charges, plus a one-twenty-fourth credit toward their prior account balances. After 24 months of on-time and in-full PIPP Plus payments, their accounts will become current.*

The new PIPP Plus maximum yearly household gross income levels for the 2020-2021 program year are: \$19,140 for one person; \$25,860 for two people; \$32,580 for three; \$39,300 for four; \$46,020 for five; \$52,740 for six; \$59,460 for seven; and \$66,180 for eight. Add \$6,720 for each additional person.

• **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** provides a one-time heating bill credit during the winter heating season. HEAP is available to customers whose yearly gross household income is up to 175 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

- **The Winter Crisis Program (WCP)**, previously known as Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (E-HEAP), provides a one-time grant to help avoid a shutoff or to restore service once between November 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021. E-HEAP and WCP are available to customers whose yearly gross income is up to 175 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Local community action agencies can assist with emergency payments to help avoid disconnection. You can find available resources—dial 2-1-1 or visit [ouw.org/211-map](http://ouw.org/211-map).
- **Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)** is a federally funded program that provides grants for home weatherization projects to customers whose incomes are no more than 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines. To qualify, a customer's yearly gross household income can be up to \$25,520 for one person; \$34,480 for two people; \$43,440 for three; \$52,400 for four; \$61,360 for five; \$70,320 for six; \$79,280 for seven; and \$88,240 for eight. Add \$8,960 for each additional person.

# Medina County Veterans Service Office

## We provide two basic services:

1. Temporary emergency financial assistance to eligible veterans and family members.
2. Help with applying to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for benefits.

## Our services are FREE of charge!

## Examples of assistance we provide:

- Rent, mortgage payments, utilities
- Food and personal hygiene items
- Medical and dental expenses
- Transportation to and from VA Centers in Cleveland, Parma and Akron
- Free public transit on MCPT in Medina County
- County Veterans ID card
- Submission for awards records, decorations and medals

When you come into the Medina County Veterans Service Office you will be assisted by one of our knowledgeable associates. Everyone here has a compassionate understanding of the problems which confront veterans, widows, widowers, and their families.



210 Northland Dr. • Medina, Ohio 44256  
(330) 722-9368  
[veterans@medinacountyveterans.org](mailto:veterans@medinacountyveterans.org)  
[www.medinacountyveterans.org](http://www.medinacountyveterans.org)





Dominion Energy has been named  
America's best managed electric  
and gas company.

**It helps when 1 in 5  
new hires is a veteran.**

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This year's "Management Top 250," published by *The Wall Street Journal*, ranks the best run U.S. companies based on customer satisfaction, employee engagement and development, innovation, social responsibility and financial strength. Dominion Energy was **ranked as the top electric and gas utility**. And military publication *G.I. Jobs* ranks Dominion Energy top in our industry and 5th among all U.S. companies. It marks the 10th consecutive year Dominion Energy has been recognized as a military-friendly company. So to each and every one of our 16,000+ dedicated employees, THANK YOU for your commitment to excellence, your dedication to community and most of all for the energy you bring to this company each and every day.

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