Well, “AREN’T YOU THE VA?” We hear this several times each day from customers thinking we’re the Wilmington VA or federal VA. They have questions about VA medical appointments or about various medical services. While we realize the similar names “Veterans Affairs” is confusing, I’d like to remind our readers that we’re a state agency, directly subordinate to the Department of State. Our agency works to connect our 72,000 veterans with benefits via our services or through our network partners. We have veterans service officers in each county who assist veterans with filing, processing, and monitoring disability compensation claims. These claims recognize any illness or injury veterans incurred while proudly serving our nation.

Our agency oversees two state veteran cemeteries, one in Millsboro and one in Bear. Both locations provide a beautiful and peaceful resting place for our Delaware veterans. We oversee the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund, an emergency financial assistance program that helps veterans during their time of financial need. These grants have been a Godsend for multiple veterans who needed assistance with rent payments, utility bills, or employment expenses. As a state agency, we are proud of our employees who will stop at nothing to point our veterans in the right direction. Whether at our cemetery or headquarters locations, our employees understand the importance of helping others and are highly knowledgeable of internal/external resources to do so. Finally, our agency relies on our 15 commissioners (advisors), who provide insight on veteran concerns throughout Delaware. So overall, we’re your state’s resource for all things veteran.
The staff of the Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Bear was recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for their outstanding service to the state’s veterans and their families.

Gov. John Carney joined the Bear team and the Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs in accepting the Operational Excellence Award from Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Randy Reeves of the VA’s National Cemetery Administration. The award places the Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery among the top five percent of state veterans’ cemeteries in the nation.

“The Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery truly is hallowed ground for those Delawareans who served their country in our armed forces, and for the loved ones who carry on the legacy of their deeds,” said Governor Carney. “I’ve always been extremely proud of the dedicated team that works every day to ensure that this resting place is maintained to the highest standards of excellence, and I congratulate them on earning the recognition they deserve.”

The VA established the Operational Excellence Award program for state and tribal cemeteries in May, 2018 to recognize outstanding service to veterans and their family members in all areas of operations. The Bear cemetery met or exceeded 82 of 90 applicable performance measures for a combined score of 91 percent in the areas of Interment Operations, Grounds Maintenance, and Headstone, Marker, and Niche Cover Operations.

“The cemeteries like the Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Bear are a model of excellence, on par with some of the best national cemeteries in the country,” said Under Secretary Reeves. “The dedication to maintaining this cemetery as a shrine truly commemorates veterans’ service and sacrifice to our nation.”

In 2016, the VA awarded a $3.67 million expansion grant for the Bear cemetery, which provides a final resting place for 45,000 Delaware veterans and their eligible family members. The Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery is administered by the Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs.

“The whole team at the Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Bear does outstanding work to honor the memory of our state’s veterans, and to support their families in their times of mourning,” said Lawrence Kirby, executive director of the Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs. “Our mission is support those who served, and I can’t think of a better group of individuals who embody that goal.”

For more information on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, contact Richelle Taylor, Public Affairs Specialist, at richelle.taylor@va.gov or call (202) 632-8011. Or more information on the Delaware Veteran Cemetery, please contact the following: Bear: 302-834-8046, Barb Cooke and Millsboro: 302-934-5653, Greg Bee.
On Sunday, October 28th, 2018, volunteers from UD cleaned approximately 7,400 headstone markers and 73 benches around the cemetery property. This project was lead by Brooks Raup, Veteran Services Coordinator at the University of Delaware. Great job by everybody and thank you for volunteering your time!

Comcast Reaches Out to Delaware Veterans

Comcast representatives Jessica Gappa and Chris Comer of the company’s Beltway Region presented a $5,000 check to benefit Delaware’s veterans to Dave Skocik and Larence Kirby at the Commission of Veterans Affairs in Dover on December 10, 2018.

Mr. Skocik is president of the Friends of Delaware Veterans, Inc., whose board is comprised of veterans who volunteer their efforts to raise money for the Trust Fund, which is under the Commission of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Kirby serves as executive director of the Commission. Both organizations work closely together to assist Delaware veterans in financial emergency. The Veterans Trust Fund was signed into law in September 2013 but is not part of the state budget and is supported by tax-deductible contributions.

“We applaud this contribution as well as Comcast’s broader outreach to veterans across Delaware and Maryland and look forward to ongoing collaboration with the company,” said Mr. Skocik. Visit www.DelawareVeteransTrustFund.com for more information on end of year organization and personal contributions.

According to Comcast’s Director of Community Impact, Jessica Gappa, Comcast is proud of its long-standing reputation as a military-friendly and military-ready company. That starts with its commitment to hiring military community members – Veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, and military spouses. The company also recently announced a significant expansion in its Internet Essentials program eligibility to low-income veterans. Eligible low-income veterans can access the power of the Internet in their homes for less than $10 a month, buy a new computer for less than $150 and access free digital literacy training online through the program. For more details on the program visit www.internetessentials.com.

Photo Caption L-R: Jessica Gappa, Director, Community Impact, Comcast; Chris Comer, Director, Government Affairs, Comcast; Dave Skocik, President, Friends of Delaware Veterans, Inc.; and Larence Kirby, Executive Director, Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs.
Delmarva Human Resource Managers Contribute to Veterans Trust Fund

Members of the Delmarva Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) gathered at Dover Downs Festival Buffet Meeting Room for a Christmas social on December 18. They hosted a silent auction that raised $300 for the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund. Wanda Spiering (standing, far left), Delmarva SHRM Board Member, and Director of Human Resources at the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA), organized the event and prepared a flyer about the Trust Fund for diners. DSHA hosts an annual bowling event at Brunswick Doverama Lanes in Rodney Village for the Trust Fund. The check was presented to Dave Skocik, president of the Friends of Delaware Veterans, at the dinner.

“It’s organizations and generous gifts like this that are so helpful to our veterans in financial crisis,” said Mr. Skocik, who was invited to the dinner and surprised by the gift. The Friends board members are veterans who volunteer their efforts to raise money for the Trust Fund, which is under the Commission of Veterans Affairs.

ALOFT AeroArchitects contributes to Veterans Trust Fund

“We are committed to supporting our local communities and veterans,” said Bob Sundin, President and CEO of ALOFT AeroArchitects in presenting a $1,000 check to the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund on January 22.

The check represented the proceeds of a “Bidding for a Cause” fund-raising event. Located at the Delaware CoastaAirport in Georgetown, Del., ALOFT AeroArchitects specializes in completions, inspections, overhaul, maintenance and auxiliary fuel systems installations for large cabin Head of State, VVIP and government aircraft and is also a Boeing Business Jet authorized Service Center. Visit www.aloftaeroarchitects.com for more information.

“We applaud this contribution and welcome ALOFT to our list of friends,” said Dave Skocik, president of the Friends of Delaware Veterans, Inc., the official fundraising organization of the Trust Fund. The Friends board, all military veterans, volunteer their time and effort to assist their fellow veterans.

The Veterans Trust Fund was signed into law in September 2013 under the Commission of Veterans Affairs to assist Delaware’s honorably discharged veterans in financial crisis, but is not part of the state budget. It is supported by tax-deductible contributions. For more information, visit www.DelawareVeteransTrustFund.com.

Photo Caption: Bob Sundin, ALOFT CEO; Angela Showell, Chairwoman, Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs; Dave Skocik, Friends of Delaware Veterans, Inc.
November 11, 2018, the Hershel “Woody” Williams Medal of Honor Foundation Delaware Gold Star Memorial was dedicated at the Delaware River Bay Authority Veterans Memorial Park. The Veterans, in attendance, were thanked for their service and shared in honoring our Gold Star Families.


Judy C. Campbell, Monument Chair and Ambassador with the Legion of Valor presented Jenny Connell, widow of POW Lieutenant Commander James Joseph Connell, with recognition from the Legion of Valor by posthumously enrolling him into membership. The Legion of Valor is a federally chartered corporation to promote patriotic allegiance to the United States. It is our Nation’s oldest military service organization and its membership is comprised of Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross and Air Force Cross Recipients.

Chad Graham, grandson of Hershel “Woody” Williams, was presented a gift of sand from Iwo Jima to take home to “Woody” with gratitude and appreciation from Delaware Gold Star Families for his service and dedication and commitment to all Gold Star Families.

The Delaware State Police (DSP) participated by posting and retiring the Colors. The service concluded with the history of TAPS being read, the Delaware State Police Pipes and Drums playing “Amazing Grace, the Delaware National Guard provided the Honor Salute followed by TAPS. Chaplain Susannah Tulloch, Major, Delaware Air National Guard, concluded with the Benediction.

The back side of the memorial has four panels with pictures etched in them, which stand for Homeland, Family, Patriotism and Sacrifice. Homeland is depicted by a picture of the DRBA, home of Delaware’s annual Veteran and Memorial Day Services. Family is depicted by a family who lost their loved one to PTSD. Patriotism is represented by a picture of 6 marines raising the U.S. Flag atop Mount Suribachi during the battle of Iwo Jima in World War II.

Sacrifice is represented by a 3rd Infantryman (the Old Guard) presenting a U.S. Flag and pictures of three gravestones. They are the graves of Sp/4 Keith Allen Campbell, PFC Philip N. Malone and PFC Stephen D. Gavin. All three were childhood friends and now rest side-by-side in the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery.

The monument also includes a granite pedestal, which provides a detail description of the memorial and appreciation to those that made it possible i.e., Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 83 Gold Star Program, the Wilmington, Delaware Gold Star Memorial Monument Committee, the DRBA and the Hershel “Woody” Williams Medal of Honor Foundation with the generous support of many organizations and individuals.
Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs (DCVA) Chairwoman, Angela Showell, was guest speaker at the Coastal-Georgetown Branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) January meeting and talked about the Commission and its outreach to Delaware's veterans.

The Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs (DCVA), a Department of State Agency, was established in 1987 to provide assistance to Delaware's veterans, their spouses and dependent children. The Commission also consists of 15 Commissioners (advisors) representing veteran service organizations and appointed by Delaware's governor to 4-year terms.

About 7,000 women are included in the state's 72,000 veteran population. The Commission manages two state cemeteries at Bear and Millsboro and has veteran service officers in each county. It has expanded its outreach during the past five years, including its involvement with Delaware Joining Forces, a network of related outside providers offering additional assistance to veterans and their families.

It also administers the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund, which was signed into law in September 2013 under the Commission to assist veterans in proven financial need.

The Friends of Delaware Veterans, an independent 501c3, serves as the official fundraising organization of the Veterans Trust Fund. The Friends’ board members are all military veterans who volunteer their time and effort to assist their fellow veterans. Applications for aid from the Trust fund are made to and determined by the Commission. Visit www.DelawareVeteransTrustFund.com for more information. The mission of the coastal Georgetown AAUW is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. https://georgetown-de.aauw.net/

Election of KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION Officers recently took place at the Georgia House Restaurant in Millsboro. Officer terms will be for a two year period starting January 1, 2019. These officers are responsible for the Mission of the organization which is to help all veterans from WW II onward to the present day. Last year the Chapter donated over $130,000 to such worthy local organizations as the Delaware Veterans Trust, Womans' Home of the Brave, Post 28 Warrior Weekend Program, Operation Warm Hearts at Dover Air Force Base, JROTC Programs at the Cape, Sussex Central and Sussex Tech High Schools and Operation Stand Down in Dover.

Anyone wishing to join or get more information about the Chapter should call or email Jack at 302 945 0698 / jomginl@aol.com.

Pictured L-R: Coastal Georgetown AAUW Meeting Programming Director, Regina Jones-Brake; DCVA Chairwoman, Angela Showell; and Coastal Georgetown AAUW President, Christine Gillean.

Pictured are Vice President Joann Sedei, President John "Jack" McGinley and Treasurer for both the Chapter and the Chapter Wounded Warrior Fund is David Miller.
Honoring the service and sacrifice of all Delaware Female Veterans
DOVER — It all began with a female-flavored fourth annual Veterans Day Parade down Loockerman Street and ended with the unveiling of the Delaware Women’s Service Monument at Legislative Hall on Saturday. It was a day of military pride in downtown Dover for Delawarans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, which this time around put an extra emphasis on women’s roles in their dedication and service to the country.

By the time the Delaware Women’s Service Monument was unveiled on the beautiful fall afternoon, the speeches preceding the moment had practically turned the event into a much-deserved pep rally for women warriors.

“Female warriors feel and bleed the same as our male warriors,” said retired Army Sgt. Major Anna Lopez, who delivered the keynote address at the ceremony and now works for the Delaware Commission on Veterans Affairs. “We have the same — but unique — challenges as well. ‘It is often difficult to display that as simply as our male counterparts at times. We don’t typically wear hats, or vests, or jackets or clothing that bluntly tells everyone, ‘I serve my country proudly.’ We keep it close to our hearts in the hopes that someone will notice that I served, too.” Sgt. Major Lopez added, “Some people have asked, ‘Why do we need a women’s military service monument?’ Well, for many reasons, but because it deserves its own special day and literally this monumental moment.”

The new Delaware Women’s Service Monument sits on the corner of Legislative Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard North. The monument is adorned with a “cross section” of 17 laser-etched images of women who have served in various roles — nurses, soldiers, pilots, loadmasters and others. Below the monument, an inscription on the pedestal reads, “Building on the accomplishments of earlier generations, today’s Delaware women are taking on new challenges in every aspect of the military, including combat service.”

By the time Saturday’s dedication came to an end, there were no more questions as to why Delaware needed a monument for women who have served in the military.

The reason for a separate Delaware women’s military monument is that women have special challenges serving our country in the military,” Dick Carter, chairman of the Delaware Heritage Commission, told lawmakers earlier.

“In fact, there have been cases, particularly in earlier years in World War I and World War II, where women had to fight for the privilege of serving our country, either in the military or sometimes they weren’t even allowed to join the military so they did it through civilian organizations, and so the feeling is widespread among women that have served in the military that there’s sort of a special status because of that fact.”

Sgt. Major Lopez said she was in awe of getting the chance to deliver the keynote speech at the event. “This is our day to celebrate our commitments, our loyalties, and especially our sacrifices to our country,” she said. “I have interacted with some beautiful and proud World War II female veterans, Korean War veterans, Vietnam War veterans and very proud female service women of all eras. “I have nothing but the utmost respect for you, not just because of your accomplishments that you should always be proud of, but because you have helped in the success of women serving in any of our military services. “We have come a very long way.”

Military women’s roles evolve

Maj. General Carol Timmons, the Adjutant General of the Delaware National Guard, has served in the military for five decades. She has seen first-hand how women’s roles in the military have changed throughout the years.

“Many of us served at a time when many positions were not open to women,” Maj. General Timmons said. “When I first started, women couldn’t fly in combat, women couldn’t do this, women couldn’t do that, and it was just based on gender. How stupid is that? “I’m very proud that I got the opportunity through my years of service to watch those roles go away and just allow the person who has the passion and the calling to serve the state and their country. How smart is that? That’s what makes us a great country.” Maj. General Timmons concluded her remarks with a heartfelt salute to all the veterans in attendance.

Guests at the ceremony also received a 75-page commemorative book titled, “A Short History of Delaware Women and their Service to our Nation.” The Delaware Heritage Commission plans to update the book in the future as more history is revealed.

The Delaware National Guard Band got Saturday’s program started with a musical prelude of patriotic songs before the Delaware National Guard presented the colors. The Delaware National Guard Band played the National Anthem before Maj. Susannah Tulloch, chaplain for the Delaware Air National Guard, gave the Invocation. Delaware Secretary of State Jeffrey Bullock made welcoming remarks and introduced dignitaries who were attending the dedication.
“The women veterans come from all walks of life and their service and sacrifice has taken many forms,” Mr. Bullock said. “From the earliest days in our state’s history, the women of Delaware have not hesitated to answer the call of duty. “With this monument, we aim to shine new light on that legacy of service and to honor all women, past, present and future, who have committed themselves to serving our state and our nation.”

**Women face different challenges**

While several of the state’s prominent politicians spoke, it was Sgt. Major Lopez’s words that captivated the audience and drew a resounding response. “I have been asked many times what my experiences were in the Army,” she said. “Some of my greatest challenges were being able to function as a soldier, as a mother, as a wife, as a daughter and as a sister, simultaneously. “There were many challenges and feelings of having to make choices between family and soldiering in my military career. Many times, I had feelings of guilt from my children and family, especially during my one-year deployment to Iraq. I knew that my kids needed their mother and that they missed me … not knowing that my heart was aching every day to be close to them.” Sgt. Major Lopez had to take a quick break to contain her emotions, then added, “Despite (all this) I knew that my service was to my country and that I would do what was necessary to serve my country in peace time and in war time. Folks say war is ugly, I know that it is. I experienced it first-hand.”

*Delaware State News staff writer Mike Finney can be reached at mfinney@newszap.com.*
The Friends of Delaware Veterans, Inc., held its 5th annual fundraising dinner for the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund at Dover Downs Rollins Center, on Nov. 3. The sold-out event raised $30,600 to help Delaware veterans in financial emergency. The fund distributes about $80,000 in hand up grants during the year. The Trust Fund was signed into law in 2013 but is not part of the state budget, which led to the creation of the Friends, a fundraising organization comprised of volunteers working in conjunction with the Commission. Tax deductible contributions can be made at www.DelawareVeteransTrustFund.com. Email dskocik@aol.com for an organizational presentation.
Edward Johnson of KWVA (DCVA Commissioner) with Platinum Sponsor award

Chad Robinson of Masonic Charities of Delaware with Platinum Sponsor award

Chuck Baldwin signs copies of his book “Carrier to Classroom,” with proceeds going to the Veterans Trust Fund. The book is available on Amazon.com.


Doug DeAngelis, Benjamin Flynn, Kathy DeAngelis, and Janet Link

Nickle Electrical Company donated a total of $5,240 to the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund through its 2018 employee matching fund drive. “This is the third year the Nickle Electrical team has ‘energized’ the annual fundraising drive of the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund,” said Dave Skocik, president of the Friends of Delaware Veterans, the 501c3, volunteer fundraising organization that supports the Trust Fund. Founded in 1986, Nickle Electrical Companies with offices in Newark and Georgetown, performs commercial, industrial, residential, and service work throughout Delaware, southeast Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia. The check was presented on November 2nd at the company’s corporate office in New Castle.
Christine Bradley, 2nd Vice President of AMVETS Post 2 Ladies Auxiliary, Long Neck Rd., Millsboro, Del., presented a $600 check to the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund following a December 20, meeting of the Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs in Dover. Receiving the check were Dave Skocik, president of the Friends of Delaware Veterans, Inc., and Angela Showell, chairperson of the Commission of Veterans Affairs.

“The ladies auxiliary is pleased to help veterans in need through the Trust Fund,” said Mrs. Bradley.

AMVETS (American Veterans) is one of America’s leading veterans service organizations. For more than 75 years, AMVETS has a proud history of assisting veterans and sponsoring numerous programs that serve our country and its citizens. Membership is open to anyone who honorably served or is currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves.

Visit www.AMVETS.org for more information.

Wreaths Across America at Legislative Hall

The Delaware General Assembly hosted an annual Wreaths Across America ceremony on Monday December 10 at Legislative Hall in Dover.

Wreaths were laid on the grounds of Legislative Hall, including the Women’s Service Monument, the Gulf War Memorial, the Dover Light Infantry Memorial, the World War I and World War II Memorials, the Korean and Vietnam Missing in Action Memorials and the Medal of Honor Memorial. Maj. Gen. Carol A. Timmons, Adjutant General of the Delaware National Guard, placed the wreath at the recently dedicated Women’s Service Monument.

The national WAA’s weeklong programs includes ceremonies in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Its family-oriented mission of “Remember, Honor, Teach,” spreads the message of the importance of remembering our fallen heroes, honoring those who serve, and teaching our children about the sacrifices made by veterans and their families to preserve our freedoms.

The program originated in 1991 when Morrill Worcester, owner of a wreath making company in Maine, donated and delivered wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery to be placed on the graves of the fallen.
SMYRNA -- Wesley College President and retired Navy Captain Robert E. Clark II served as keynote speaker at the dedication of a Pearl Harbor memorial at Smyrna’s Lake Como on Friday, December 7, 2018.

Robert Clark became the 17th President of Wesley College in July 2015, after 32 years of distinguished service in the United States Navy’s Submarine Force, including service as the 84th Commandant of Midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy, where he served from April 2010 until May 2013, becoming the longest standing Commandant in the Naval Academy’s history.

During a distinguished Navy career Captain Clark held command at all levels of the Submarine Force during the Cold War, including Commanding Officer of the USS Connecticut (SSN 22), and Commodore of Submarine Squadron Four. "I've had the privilege of leading and learning from the finest Sailors in the world, and look forward to being with some of them again on this dedication," he said. The memorial is a joint effort of the Vietnam Vets Legacy Vets Motor Cycle Club, the Town of Smyrna, state officials, and local contractors. Ground was broken on August 10 for the memorial that will commemorate the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

The project is a collaboration of funding from the state, the motorcycle club, the Delaware State Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the contribution of a 3,000 lb. anchor from a 1942 U.S. Navy destroyer that will become part of the memorial with a traditional stone marker depicting an image of the attack on ‘battleship row’ in 1941. The Delaware Military Academy in Wilmington, an accredited Navy Jr. ROTC High School founded in 2003, will provide a color guard for the event. DMA school co-founder, retired Navy Command Master Chief Charles Baldwin, who procured the anchor from the Military Sealift Command, will also participate in the program.

President Roosevelt’s words, “A date that will live in infamy,” will be inscribed at the top, with VVA’s national logo, “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another,” at the bottom.
American Legion Family of Post 17
Brings Christmas Cheer to the Lewes Army Reserve Center

American Legion Post 17 Family members brighten the Army Reserve Center with a patriotic Christmas tree and gifts for the children of the Reservists. Seen here, left to right, are Judi Hammond (Co-Chair of the Auxiliary’s Children and Youth Program), Anna Logan, Carol Cianfi one, Auxiliary President Murt Foos, Cindy Butler, Dallas Butler, SONS Adjutant Tom Murray and Auxiliary Chaplain Dorothy Murray. Other volunteers not pictured are SONS Chaplain John Hammond, SONS Historian Dan Davis, Auxiliary Vice President Di Davis, Auxiliary Secretary Gail Sellazzo, Pat Schneider, Karen and Vince Bernhard.
Bulova team visits Veterans Watchmaking Initiative in historic Odessa

ODESSA, Del. – Two days before the annual celebration of Veterans Day, a team from the Bulova Watch Company, which included a video team of videographers, visited the nation's unique watchmaking school for disabled military veterans in Odessa, Delaware, a town with a history of watchmaking dating back several centuries.

Founded by Sam Cannan, a Swiss-trained, internationally certified watchmaker, the school provides tuition-free education to teach disabled American servicemen the skills of watchmaking under the expert supervision of professional watchmakers. It recently celebrated its first anniversary.

The school is based on the Joseph Bulova School of Watchmaking created in 1945 by Joseph Bulova's son Arde Bulova in an effort "to repay in some small measure, the sacrifice and service of returning disabled veterans after the Second World War," for disabled veterans. It trained a generation of American watchmakers.

Mr. Cannan lives in Dover and makes the daily 45-mile commute to the school to work with six students nearing graduation. His expertise is in the repair of high-end mechanical watches, including Rolex, Patek Philippe, Baume & Mercier, Ebel, Panerai, Tag Heuer, and Breitling. He designed, developed, constructed and equipped state of the art watch labs used as today's industry standard and has been recognized by the international watch industry.

While the school can only accommodate six veterans at the present time, it has a long list of applicants from across the nation. In addition to the Odessa facility, future plans include the construction of a handicapped accessible facility on four acres of donated land in Middletown, Delaware, that will accommodate as many as 25 veterans who can be trained in various aspects of watch repair and watchmaking.

Visit www.veteranswatchmakerinitiative.org, email scannan@vwwi.org, or call 302-465-2421 for more information on assisting in or donating to its programs. A clip of the interview done during the Bulova visit can be seen at www.Bulova.com then clicking on the Veterans Watchmaking Initiative.

Photo 1: LtoR: Laura Mitchell, Jody Singer, Eileen Butterfield, Sam Cannan, Debbie Lotosky, Holly Collier, Jenna Wernovsky

Photo 2: Sam Cannan being interviewed on November 9 for video commissioned by Bulova.
# 2019 DJF Community Network

**Quarterly Meetings**

**Thursdays**

All DJF Community Network Meetings are **8:30am-10:00am**

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Are you registered in the DJF Network Directory?
SERVICE PROVIDERS REGISTER AT ➔ [http://www.delaware.gov/DJF](http://www.delaware.gov/DJF)

The DJF Steering Committee will meet on an as needed basis.

## Points of Contact

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O (302) 739-2293
E Laurence.Kirby@state.de.us

*No single organization can meet all the needs of our Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF), but a community of partners can provide an array of essential services.*
PLEASE JOIN US FOR A Military Women's Tea On March 30, 2019

Military Pictures Requested (By March 15th)
FB: VeteransAwarenessCenterDE
Twitter: de_veterans
IG: veteransawarenesscenterde
Email: VeteransAwarenessCenterDE@gmail.com

Dover Elks Lodge #1903
200 Saulsbury Road
Dover, DE 19904
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
RSVP By March 15, 2019
302-349-4898
Natural Harbor Farm: Delaware Farm for Disabled Veterans

This is a “Not for Profit” entity that is working with homeless veterans. We are working to restore Veterans to a place of productivity, with a high level of self-esteem and an asset to their local community. We can currently house 18 people on the farm with the current existing houses on 93 acres a very fertile farm and pasture land with 2 spring fed stocked ponds. There are 3 large barns 3 garages and many outer buildings and paddocks for livestock.

Our Goal is to train the veterans and youth in the following trades.
1. Contemporary Sustainable farming and ranching
2. Hydroponic Greenhouses

We are in the process of purchasing a farm with current and future housing to house homeless veterans and at risk youth. We have a passion to help the veterans when we found out by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) states that about 15% of the homeless are veterans. The majority of the veterans are single; live in urban areas; and suffer from mental illness, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or reoccurring disorders.

About 1.4 million veterans are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and miserable living conditions. The goal of our farm is to help disabled veterans get back on their feet while teaching them a trade in some specific fields such as farming, various types of animal husbandry, smoked meats and culinary arts sales (both retail and wholesale) landscaping, catering and marketing.

We found this farm and knew instantly that it is perfect for us to help the veteran and the community as well as the State of Delaware. The owners of the property want to sell us the farm to help the veterans and have waited patiently for over a year for it to happen. Now they must sell the property but are giving us first option. They really like what we want to do and are willing to lease us the property on an annual basis for one year only. They agree this will be more than enough time for us to get started and raise the money to buy the property.

The farm is on 94 acres with about 68 acres are tillable 13 marsh and 13 woods. It has 3 other houses currently to house the vets and we plan to build a dormitory in the near future. The farm will be run organically. We will produce organic self-sustainable fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs, and dairy products. We will also raise free range animals such as chickens both for laying and meat, turkey, pheasant, quail, partridge, ducks and geese. Pigs, sheep cows (for Black Angus for beef and Guernsey for milk), horses to work the farm, dogs and cats to keep out predatory animals. The vegetables will not be seasonal because they will be grown in greenhouses all year round. All products will be sold by the vets to local farmers markets, supermarkets private restaurants and wholesale to the communities.

After the new housing facility will be added it will also have a Commercial USDA quality facility to prepare organic prepared meats: lamb, bacon, ham, fish and sausage in order to expand our product line and increase sales. The veterans will also assist in all fencing and landscaping, construction, repair and maintenance around the farm. They will also help with harvesting the crops and feeding and caring for the animals as well as work on projects of the property and to help other organizations.

The veterans will be set up with proper medical care and counseling through the VA and retrain them in various areas on the farm. The veterans on the farm will work the farm helping to rehabilitate themselves. As we work with the veterans, they are supported in a safe, sanctioned place to exercise, socialize, and develop skills that will be useful throughout their lives. We will house the veterans rent free even if they have benefits. If they have benefits, we insist that they save a large portion of it to be applied to new housing when they leave the program.

Housing will need to be added as well as barns and sheds for the animals. The plan is to house Veteran Families, Men and Women in one “U” shaped building on the street side of the property. We will be providing meals three times per day in our café in order to instill a family atmosphere. The veterans in the culinary course will be preparing the healthy meals. All buildings will be eventually equipped with solar panels to save on utilities. (We will be applying for a Federal Grant and asking for donations to accomplish this).
**Phase II:** This Phase will include a housing project to add housing for 65 Vets. There will be a three wing ranch with a circular driveway in front and a pool behind which will have a retractable enclosure. This will be used all year round for therapy and fitness. The first wing will be for single women, the second wing will be for families and the third wing will be for single men. We believe this will be the 1st facility in Delaware that will allow Veteran families to live together.

**Phase III:** We will be adding a large barn for the additional animals with a second floor with commercial kitchen and catering/theater arts center this will allow us to raise funds and educate the veterans on many different subjects.

Natural Harbor is dedicated to the process of making this happen but we need your help. Your help will bring us closer to our goal to purchase or rent the property as a whole for one year and to cover all the listed items in phase I. Our community is clearly excited and eager to see this project succeed.

We are happy to acknowledge your donation on our website and at our numerous events, (unless you prefer otherwise). I would like to thank you for considering this opportunity to partner with our organization for raising funds. If you have any questions or comments regarding our organization, or the project itself, please feel free to contact me at the address given below or call me at 302-593-2249.

Thank you,

Joseph and Angie Ushinski
Natural Harbor
300 Saw Mill Branch Road
Townsend, DE 19734
[www.naturalharbor.win](http://www.naturalharbor.win)

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**Definition of Harbor:**

* A place of Safety of Refuge, Security, Comfort,
* A place where vessels seek shelter especially from rough times,
* A place of commerce, loading and unloading of goods,
* A place of supply,
* A place of Provisioning,
* A place that furnishes anchorage
The effect of military service can be profound and lasting. There are a number of financial, social and health issues that result from military service. Some Wounded Warriors and Veterans who have a compensation rating of 100% P&T are unaware that Social Security may expedite the processing of their disability claims. Benefits available through Social Security are different than those from the Department of Veterans Affairs and require a separate application. The expedited process is used for military service members who become disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs. Starting March 17, 2014, veterans who have a VA compensation rating of 100% permanent and total (P&T) may receive expedited processing of applications for Social Security disability benefits.

What do I need to know about the VA & Social Security programs?
Both Social Security and VA pay disability benefits. However, their programs, processes and criteria for receiving benefits are very different. A VA compensation rating of 100% Permanent and Total does not guarantee that you will receive Social Security disability benefits. To be approved for Social Security benefits, you must meet Social Security’s definition of “disability.” To be found disabled:

- You must be unable to do substantial work because of your medical condition(s); and
- Your medical condition(s) must have lasted, or be expected to last, at least one year or to result in death.

If you receive VA compensation, this will not affect your Social Security benefits. Even active duty military who continue to receive pay while in a hospital or on medical leave should consider applying for disability benefits if they are unable to work due to a disabling condition. Active duty status and receipt of military pay does not necessarily prevent payment of Social Security disability benefits. Although a person cannot receive SS disability benefits while engaging in substantial work for pay or profit, receipt of military payments should never stop someone from applying for disability benefits from Social Security.

For those who return home with injuries, SS is a resource they can turn to for disability benefits. Social Security’s Wounded Warriors website is at: www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors

With over 80 years of experience and compassionate service, Social Security is proud to support our veterans and active duty members of the military. Both today and tomorrow these heroes can count on us when they need their earned benefits. For more information please visit: https://www.ssa.gov/people/veterans/ Call or visit your local Social Security Office: 1-800-772-1213

Dear Colleagues:
We have become aware of reports of fraudulent telephone calls from individuals claiming to represent the Social Security Administration (SSA). In them, unknown callers are using threatening language to warn unknowing victims that they will be arrested or face other legal action if they fail to call a provided phone number or press the number indicated in the message to address the issue. In some instances, these unknown callers switch tactics and communicate that they want to help an individual with activating a suspended Social Security number. Such calls are a scam, and are not coming from official SSA representatives.

We encourage you to inform your members and extended networks not to engage with such callers, and to report any suspicious calls to Social Security's Office of the Inspector General by calling 1-800-269-0271 or submitting a report on the OIG website: Caution-https://oig.ssa.gov/report. We also urge you to read and share our Social Security Matters blog: Caution-https://blog.ssa.gov/ig-warns-public-about-fraudulent-phone-calls-threatening-arrest-or-legal-action/, which provides more information on the nature of these fraudulent calls, as well as instructions on how to report such activity.

Social Security is committed to protecting the privacy and security of the people we serve. We appreciate your help in spreading the word about this important topic.

Sincerely,

Matthew Baxter
Public Affairs Specialist
Social Security Administration
(T) 877-651-7130 ext. 21570

URGENT: SOCIAL SECURITY SCAM ALERT!
Help Us Raise Awareness!

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Matthew Baxter
Public Affairs Specialist
Social Security Administration
(T) 877-651-7130 ext. 21570
**VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS**

**New Castle County:** Lisa Smith  
Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Bear, DE  
Monday – Friday: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM  
*Please call for an appointment:*  
(302) 365-8231

**Kent County:** Josh Matticks  
DCVA office in Dover, DE  
Monday–Friday: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM  
*Please call for an appointment:*  
(302) 257-3119

**Sussex County:** Laurie Corsa  
Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Millsboro, DE  
Monday-Friday: 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM  
*Please call for an appointment:*  
(302) 648-3068

**Disabled American Veterans:**

**New Castle County Schedule:**  
1601 Kirkwood Hwy, Bldg. 13, Room 27  
Wilmington, DE 19805  
9:00 AM-12:00 PM & 1:00 PM- 3:00 PM  
Mon, Tues, Wed & Fri: Walk-in Basis  
Appointments Recommended  
*Gerald Loudon: (302) 993-7258*

**Kent County Schedule:**  
DAV Headquarters Building  
183 South Street  
Camden, DE 19934  
Monday thru Thursday 8:00-11:00 AM  
(Walk-ins)  
1:00-3:00 PM (Appt. only)  
*DAV Dept. Service Officers: (302) 697-9061  
Paul Lardizzone: (302) 382-3448  
H. Mark Wischmann: (302) 382-3449*

**Sussex County Schedule:**  
Department of Labor - Div. of Employment & Tng.  
20993 Office Circle, Georgetown, DE 19947  
(302) 856-5230  
Thursday 8:00-12:00 PM (Walk-ins)  
*Kent & Sussex evening appointments prescheduled by request only.*

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**American Legion**

Joseph T. Houghton  
Dept. Service Officer:  
(302) 993-7255

**2018 Quarterly Scheduled Post Visits:**

**Friday, January 4, 2019:**  
Oak Orchard/Riverdale/Post #28-Millsboro  
10:00 AM- 1:00 PM: (302) 945-1673

**Friday, January 11, 2019**  
Walter L Fox/Post #2 –Dover  
10:00 AM-1:00 PM: (302) 674-3922

**Friday, February 1, 2019**  
Oak Orchard/Riverdale/Post #28-Millsboro  
10:00 AM- 1:00 PM: (302) 945-1673

**Friday, February 8, 2019:**  
Walter L Fox/ Post #2 –Dover  
10:00 AM- 1:00 PM: (302) 674-3922

**Friday, March 8, 2019:**  
Walter L Fox/ Post #2 –Dover  
10:00 AM- 1:00 PM: (302) 674-3922

**Friday, March 15, 2019:**  
Oak Orchard/Riverdale/Post #28-Millsboro  
10:00 AM- 1:00 PM: (302) 945-1673

**Friday, March 29, 2019:**  
Post #19, Laurel, DE  
10:00 AM- 1:00 PM: (302) 875-9948

*Times/dates are subject to change.*

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**Paralyzed Veterans of America (DE/MD PVA)**

VA Regional Office  
1601 Kirkwood Hwy, Room 26  
Wilmington, DE 19805  
(302) 993-7252/7253

2114 S DuPont Hwy, Suite 2, Dover DE  
Thursdays: 8:00 AM - 12 PM

Dover CBOC:  
1st & 3rd Thursdays: 1PM - 4PM

Georgetown CBOC:  
2nd & 4th Thursdays: 1PM - 4PM
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
David Hilliard, VA Regional Office
1601 Kirkwood Hwy, Room 21
Wilmington, DE 19805
(302) 993-7260
*Please call for appointments.

Dover DOL: (302) 993-7260
1st – 4th Thursdays: 8:30-11:30 AM
Blue Hen VFW Post 6483: (302) 422-4412
1st Thursdays: 1:30-4:00 PM
Virgil Wilson VFW Post 4961 - (302) 629-3092
2nd & 4th Thursdays: 1:30-4:00 PM
Rehoboth VFW: (302) 227-3469
3rd Thursdays: 1:30-4:00 PM

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)
Terry Baker
National Service Officer
VA Regional Office
1601 Kirkwood Hwy
Wilmington, DE 19805
(302) 993-7250/7251 or (302) 540-8772 (c)

DE VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERIES

Bear Cemetery
2465 Chesapeake City Road
Bear, DE 19701
(302) 834-8046: Barbara A. Cooke

Millsboro Cemetery
26669 Patriots Way
Millsboro, DE 19966
(302) 934-5653: Gregory A. Bee

Employment Services:
Allen Jones (Wilmington): (302) 761-8141
Cleopatra Jones (Wilmington): (302) 761-8077
(302) 451-3457
Cliff Rumph (Dover): (302) 857-5866
Kevin Gunning (Dover) : (302) 857-5870
Gail Gartner (Georgetown): (302) 858-5232
Division of Vocational Rehab. : (302) 761-8275

Wilmington Regional Benefit Office
(302) 761-8262
1601 Kirkwood Hwy
Wilmington, DE 19805
(800) 827-1000
http://www.wilmington.va.gov/

VA Medical Center
1601 Kirkwood Hwy
Wilmington, DE 19805
(800) 461-8262 or (302) 994-2511

DCVA Program:
Christine F. Kubik
DE Nat’l Guard
Community Relations
(302) 326-7582
christine.f.kubik.nfg@mail.mil

Please visit our website
www.delaware.gov/djf/

Mark Taylor
Community Outreach Specialist
Office of Director
Office: (302) 994-2511 ext. 4598
Work cell: (302) 932-7519
Fax: (302) 633-5591
Email: mark.taylor10@va.gov
Veterans United Outreach of Delaware has become Delaware’s newest Veterans 501(C)(3) tax deductible charity. Since its founding at Dover Days in 2001 Veterans United Outreach of Delaware has been a committee of Vietnam Veterans of America, Dover Chapter 850. We have separated from the Chapter 850 for two primary reasons: to eliminate restrictions on how the Outreach Team operates that existed by adhering to the national by-laws of Vietnam Veterans of America; to allow us to freely recruit volunteers and team members from all veterans’ organizations. While Veterans United Outreach as an entity is separating from Chapter 850 all of our veteran team members remain loyal active members of the VVA Chapter.

The Outreach networks with federal, state and local agencies and coordinates with all veteran organizations in Delaware. It has expanded from Kent County to the entire state of Delaware. Through it all we are constantly changing and growing.

We are a veteran’s outreach with a foundation in God, Country, and Freedom, to which we credit the sacrifices of our active duty military, our veterans, and their families. We have a mobile educational unit, with an extensive library of information for all veterans and their family members.

Mike Snyder: 302-678-1285
Gary Kalms: gmkskler@gmail.com
http://www.veteransunitedoutreach.com/

State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) currently has funding available for the Traumatic Brain Injury Fund and encourages people who may benefit to apply

Applying for the Traumatic Brain Injury Fund
**Applications are available here:**

Since July 2013, the General Assembly has allocated funding to SCPD to administer a Brain Injury Fund. In order to qualify for the funding applicants must fully complete an application and meet these requirements:
-- Must be a Delaware resident.
-- Provide denial of service letters from existing insurance.
-- The person receiving the funds must have medical documentation of a brain injury.

Covered services under the Traumatic Brain Injury Fund may include the following:
* Home and Environmental Modifications
* Driver Rehabilitation
* Service Dog Acquisition and Support
* Assistive Technology
* Short-term attendant services not covered under other funding sources
* Medically approved summer day camps
* Other services approved by the TBI Fund Committee.

For additional information on the Traumatic Brain Injury Fund, please contact Director John McNeal.
   Phone: (302)-739-3620
   Email: John.McNeal@state.de.us

Delaware State University
VA Advisor: (302) 857-6376

Delaware Technical Community College
Dover: Rebecca Craft
   (302) 857-1056
   rcraft@dtcc.edu
Georgetown: Angela Showell
   (302) 259-6073/
   ashowel3@stcc.edu
Stanton: Wilford Oney
   (302) 454-3926
   woney@dtcc.edu
Wilmington: Joe Limmina
   (302) 571-5307
   jlimmina@dtcc.edu

University of Delaware
Suzanne Staley
302-831-6592/
   sstanley@udel.edu

Wesley College
Erin Elsberry
302-736-2434/ Erin.elsberry@wesley.edu

Widener University School of Law
 Pattie Donoghue
302-477-2710/ pmdonoghue@widener.edu

Wilmington University
Jim Webb / Jennifer Bacci
302-342-8669 / 302-356-6962
   james.s.webb@wilmu.edu
   jennifer.l.bacci@wilmu.edu
Commissioners’ Organizations:

Angela Showell (Chair) At Large
Jason Stewart (Vice Chair) At Large

Charles T. Armbruster American Legion
Charles W. Baldwin VVA
Eugene Bradley AMVETS
William ‘Bill’ Farley MCL
Edward Johnson KWVA
Paul Lardizzone DAV
Anna Lopez At Large (DELVETS)
Richard Magner MOPH
William “Bill” McMullen AFSA
Mark Newman VFW

Barry Newstadt (JWV)

Dr. Ronald Sarg MOAA
Earl E. Seppala At Large (MOWW)

Veterans Organizations:

Air Force Sergeants Association
Alexander Collazo, MSgt (302) 677-5264

American Legion
Richard “Ric” Santos (302) 628-5221

AMVETS
Eugene Bradley (302) 945-2170

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Elmer (Art) Titus (302) 284-4719

Delaware Veterans (DELVETS)
Post 1 (302) 475-9891
Post 2 (302) 674-9956

Delaware Veterans Coalition
Dave Skocik (302) 736-8500
E-mail: delawareveteranscoalition@gmail.com

Disabled American Veterans
Paul Lardizzone (302) 697-9061

First State Military Women Warriors
Paula Witcher (302) 505-0849

Fleet Reserve Association
Philip Pushel (302) 322-0681

Gold Star Families
Judy Campbell (302) 332-0913

40 & 8
Eugene “Chip” Rosan (302) 678-8077

Jewish War Veterans
Len Markovitz (302) 234-4785

Korean War Veterans Association
Edward Johnson (302) 933-0228

Marine Corps League
William C. Farley (302) 242-7926

Military Officers Association of America
Tom Kelly (New Castle Co.) (302) 834-9659
Ron Sarg (Kent Co.) (302) 678-1603
Fred Seth, Jr. (Sussex Co.) (302) 519-0611

Military Order of the Purple Heart
Gary “Mo” Morris (302) 422-6706

Military Order of the World Wars
Earl Seppala (302) 239-0641
E-mail: eseppala@aol.com

Veterans of Foreign Wars
Paul Phillips Jr. (302) 656-5022

Veterans Treatment Court Program
Assist justice-involved veterans with mental health & substance abuse issues to obtain necessary services and reduce recidivism.
(302) 255-0646 (New Castle Co.)
(302) 735-1915 (Kent Co.)

Widey Law Clinic:
Pro Bono Representation for Veterans
(302) 477-2090
Delaware.widener.edu

Veterans Outreach Programs:

People’s Place: Listening Post Lower Delaware
Mike Rowe: (302) 422-8033 x 173

SSVF: Supportive Services for Veteran Families
Connections: Mindy Bacchus
(302) 250-5868 New Castle Co.
(302) 518-5338 Kent Co.
(302) 332-0913 Sussex Co.

VMC -Veterans Multi-Service Center:
Pamela Wischer (302) 505-0849

Vet. Centers (Readjustment Counseling):
Vet Center/New Castle Co. (800) 461-8262 x 5434
Vet Center/Kent Co. (800) 461-8262 x 2430
Vet Center/Sussex Co. (302) 225-9110

Delaware Veterans Awareness Center:
Liz & Bill Jiron (302) 349-4898
Veteransawarenesscenter.org
Veterans’ Stand Down * Military Women’s Tea
“Give a Vet a Smile” (Dental Program)

Retired Activities Office:
Bldg. 520, Room 105, Dover AFB, DE 19902
MSgt (R) Bill Oldham (302) 677-4610
William.Oldham.2@us.af.mil

Retired Navy Activities Affairs Office:
Naval & Marine Corps Reserve Ctr. (866) 827-5672

Veterans Justice Outreach Program: 302-468-5670

Veterans Treatment Court Program:
Assist justice-involved veterans with mental health & substance abuse issues to obtain necessary services and reduce recidivism.
(302) 255-0646 (New Castle Co.)
(302) 735-1915 (Kent Co.)

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Ron Sarg (Kent Co.) (302) 678-1603
Fred Seth, Jr. (Sussex Co.) (302) 519-0611

Military Order of the Purple Heart
Gary “Mo” Morris (302) 422-6706

Military Order of the World Wars
Earl Seppala (302) 239-0641
E-mail: eseppala@aol.com

Natl’l Association of Black Veterans
Nolan S. Lewis (302) 345-6911

The Reserve Officers Association
LTC Richard Chappell (Ret.) (302) 234-1418
E-mail: rwc49ps54ud@comcast.net

Veterans of Foreign Wars
Paul Phillips Jr. (302) 656-5022

Veterans of Foreign Wars
Paul Davis (302) 697-8384
DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Certificate of Appreciation Application

Veterans Name: ________________________________________________________________

First          Middle          Last

Address: _________________________________________________________________

Street        City         State         Zip

Phone: (Home) __________________________________________ (Work or Cell)__________

Date Entered Service __________ Date Separated __________ Branch of Service ______

Date of Birth ______ Type of Discharge________________ Highest Rank Achieved __________

(Only required if requesting rank on certificate)

Is Veteran Deceased?  Yes or No (please circle one)

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: A current resident of the State of Delaware or resident when he or she entered the Armed Forces of the United States and honorably discharged.

Please submit this application with a copy of Certificate of Release or

Discharge from Active Duty, (DD-214) to:

Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs
Robbins Building
802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE 19904
Phone: (302) 739-2792 or 1-800-344-9900 (in State only)

Signature of Veteran/spouse or next of kin ________________________________ Date __________

Print Name and Relationship if not veteran _________________________________

Provide alternate address if different from above ________________________________

NOTE: Please anticipate 2 to 3 weeks in receiving your Certificate

TO BE COMPLETED BY DCVA: ______ Approved ______ Pending ______ Disapproved

Name/Title: ________________________________ Date __________