



Office of the Governor  
JOHN BEL EDWARDS

# CHALLENGES MET. PROGRESS DELIVERED.

Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016–2023

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# 01

## Introduction

### Message from LDVA Secretary Joey Strickland, COL (USA Retired)

At the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, every day is Veterans Day, and every day is Memorial Day, because every day we are honoring and taking care of veterans across our great state, including caring for our 600 veterans living in our five veterans homes. Every day we are burying veterans with honor and dignity in our five state-run veterans cemeteries. As a veteran, it was a great honor to serve our country in the United States Army for thirty years including two combat tours in Vietnam. It was because of my time in uniform that I chose to continue my service to my fellow veterans. It has been my privilege to serve as Louisiana's Secretary of Veterans Affairs under Gov. John Bel Edwards, in addition to other governors before him. It has been especially important to me to have the support from a Governor who is also a veteran and understands firsthand the importance of a smooth transition from service to civilian life.

During this administration, our team at the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs has made great strides in furthering our mission to provide comprehensive care and quality service to Louisiana's veterans, and their families, with regard to health care, education, disability benefits, long-term care and burial honors. We continue to move forward professionally in terms of customer service, training and outreach to meet veterans where they are. This includes utilizing new technology, upgrading equipment and developing and implementing new programming.

Success starts at the top, and Gov. Edwards has set the standard high. I am proud of what we have accomplished during his tenure, and I am hopeful for the future of the department.

*"We are dealing with veterans, not procedures—  
with their problems, not ours." - Gen. Omar Bradley*

### Executive Summary

The staff of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs are proud to serve Louisiana's 283,000 veterans and their families. In the past eight years, we have implemented a program to serve Louisiana's nearly 10,000 student veterans and their families on 32 public and private college and university campuses across the state. At our five state-run veterans cemeteries, we have made in excess of \$22 million in expansion and improvement projects, of which \$12.9 million were made in 2023. Finally, we assumed operation of the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park and have led the way making additions to the park to honor veterans.

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# Progress Delivered



## Legislation Successfully Passed

2016	HB 988 Act 185	Rep. James Armes	Opened up the Military Family Assistance Fund (administered by LDVA) to all veterans, allowing LDVA to provide timely post-disaster assistance after the 2016 historic floods.
2018	SB 175 Act 1	Sen. Jonathan Perry	Established the Gold Star Families Honor Monument in the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park (renaming the Old Arsenal Park, adjacent to the State Capitol building).
2019	HB 137 Act 390	Rep. James Armes, Rep. Steven Pugh	Updated the advisory nature and specific duties of the Veterans Affairs Commission.
2020	HB 70 Act 167	Rep. Mike Johnson	Updated Louisiana National Guard Disability Benefit to add (in addition to existing \$100,000 benefit) a new \$50,000 disability benefit for Qualifying Subsequent Examination where veteran reaches eligible 100% Service Connection as required under LA R.S. 29:26.1.
2021	SB 105 Act 432	Sen. Gerald Boudreaux, Rep. Royce Duplessis	Established the African-American Veterans Honor Monument in the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park.
2022	HB 123 Act 606	Rep. Mike Johnson	Updated Louisiana National Guard Disability Benefit to allow additional later-claimed eligible service-connected disabilities to count toward the 100% Service Connection required under La R.S. 29:26.1 for a veteran to receive the \$50,000 benefit.
2022	HB 718 Act 229	Rep. Chuck Owen	Added hunting and fishing license discounts/free licenses for non-resident veterans, retired military personnel and Purple Heart recipients.
2023	HB 231 Act 69	Rep. Buddy Mincey	Allowed LDVA to promulgate rules now to be able to allow interment under state law for the additional National Guard and Reserve veterans newly allowed to be buried in state-run veteran cemeteries under the 2022 Burial Equity Act Congress passed.
2023	HCR 9	Rep. Buddy Mincey	Established the Purple Heart Trail in the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park.
2023	SB 115 Act 46	Sen. Gerald Boudreaux	Closed two loopholes in the state of Louisiana's Title 29 tuition waiver for certain veterans' dependents: allowing families of deceased veterans to prove that the veteran was a Louisiana resident for two years prior to death (in addition to allowing showing one year prior to entering service, since two years prior to death may be easier for the family to prove) and also adding that if a veteran 90-100% service-connected (which would mean a child would be eligible for the tuition waiver) passes away, then their children would still be eligible for the tuition waiver. Previously the statute said that they would have had to die of a service-connected disability, meaning that the veteran's children going to school after a veteran passes away would lose their eligibility. This bill also required every employer with 50 or more employees to post information on veterans' benefits and services for their employees: LDVA created that poster now available on our department website, <a href="http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov">www.vetaffairs.la.gov</a> , for all employers to use.
2023	SCR 11	Sen. Rogers Pope	Expression of legislative will to continue the Capitol Park master plan to expand the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park on the state Capitol Complex.

## Creation of LaVetCorps Program for Student Veterans

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs LaVetCorps program, initiated in 2018, was modeled after a similar program in Washington State. LDVA staff wrote a proposal/planning grant to the Corporation for National Community Service and secured funding for LaVetCorps, in addition to funding from the Louisiana Legislature, for the program's official launch in the 2019-20 academic year. The program will start its fifth year in August which is the second year of the second, three-year cycle. The LaVetCorps program is the second of its kind in the nation and has since been replicated in Rhode Island.

LaVetCorps is a partnership with the Governor's Office, the Louisiana Board of Regents, Louisiana's higher education community and AmeriCorps, a service-based organization. LDVA's student veteran leaders, called Navigators, serve Louisiana's nearly 10,000 student veterans and their families on 32 public and private college and university campuses across the state. The program began with 30 campuses and recently added

two additional campuses with 29 being public and three private (Tulane University, University of Holy Cross and Xavier University). Additionally, with the growth of the veteran population at Louisiana State University and Grambling State University, there are now two Navigators at each of those campuses.

The mission of the program is to help student veterans transitioning home from service by connecting them with the benefits that they have earned by working with LDVA's veteran assistance counselors. LaVetCorps is now a part of how a campus comes to receive a Military Friendly campus designation, and through LDVA's partnership with the Board of Regents, this program has spurred much greater visibility of veterans students and how best to serve them. Navigators also foster a veteran-friendly environment on campus and educate faculty and staff on the needs of student veterans, and serve in the communities their campuses are located in.

## State-run Veterans Cemetery Expansions

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs operates five state-run veterans cemeteries across the state located in Leesville, Rayville, Keithville, Slidell and Jennings. In 2020, the Southwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Jennings opened, and there are currently expansion projects underway at the other four cemeteries. These projects ensure that LDVA is able to provide a final resting place of dignity and honor for Louisiana's veterans, their spouses and dependents.

Projects at the four cemeteries—the Central Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Leesville; the Northeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Rayville; the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Keithville; and the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Slidell—are funded in part by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the state totaling more than \$12.9 million.

### Central Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, Leesville

\$2.25 million project  
VA funded with state-matching funds expansion project adding 280 columbarium niches, which are individual compartments in a vertical wall for cremated remains, improvements of a well filtering system, erosion repair and control and adding of the Space Force medallion in the committal shelter

### Northeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, Rayville

\$1.1 million project  
VA funded with state-matching funds expansion project adding 830 pre-placed concrete crypts, improvements of signage and existing cement repair

### Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, Keithville

\$4.4 million project  
VA funded with state-matching funds expansion project adding 1,520 pre-placed concrete crypts, 1,260 columbarium niches, improvements of new pump houses, signage, automating of the gates, adding a flag court, erosion control, adding a Gettysburg address plaque, adding the Space Force medallion in the committal shelter, cortege lane, new section markers and new outside cemetery map

### Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, Slidell

\$5.2 million project  
VA funded expansion adding 2,800 pre-placed concrete crypts and 650 in-ground cremains

## Additions to the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park

The Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park is a beautiful place of honor to Louisiana's veterans. Since transitioning from the Old Arsenal Park, the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs has worked with the Governor's Office, the Office of State Buildings and others to revitalize the park. Additions to the park include the Gold Star Monument in honor of Louisiana's Gold Star mothers and families, the first of its kind in Louisiana; the Minute Man Monument in honor of those who have served in the Louisiana National Guard; the braille flag in honor of blinded veterans; and the Purple Heart plaque below the bust of George Washington in honor of veterans wounded in combat. Sen. Jonathan Perry sponsored SB 175, later Act 1, of the 2018 Regular Session which established the Gold Star Monument in the park and changed the park's name from the Old Arsenal Park to the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park.

During the 2023 Regular Session, Rep. Buddy Mincey sponsored HCR 9 to authorize the Purple Heart Walking Trail as another addition to the park. There will be signage from the roadways around the park indicating that there is a Purple Heart Walking Trail as well as medallions in the sidewalks throughout the park.

## Veterans Outreach Program and Suicide Prevention

In 2020, LDVA hired a director of veteran outreach and implemented outreach programming in five areas: women veterans, veteran suicide prevention, veteran homelessness prevention, veteran employment assistance and Gold Star mothers and families support. LDVA's Veterans Outreach Program will continue its work with many state and federal entities in addition to non-profit organizations supporting veterans. Additionally, outreach and communications staff work together to host events throughout the year including the Suicide Prevention Summit and the Gold Star Mothers and Families Recognition Ceremony.

Louisiana's first Veterans Suicide Prevention Summit was held in 2019 and has been held annually in September, Suicide Prevention Month, ever since. Each year, the goal of the summit is to ensure that all attendees leave the event as better suicide prevention advocates through effective training and instruction on suicidal ideology and how to assist those in danger. Many times there are underlying issues for veterans who are considering suicide such as mental illness or substance abuse, and LDVA works with many organizations to address those issues.

## Successful Partnership with the Federal Government and Other States

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs has strengthened relationships with the federal VA throughout the years, specifically with regards to Louisiana's three VA medical centers and the Veterans Experience Office.

Louisiana has three federal VA medical centers located in New Orleans, Alexandria and Shreveport.

- Southeast Louisiana Healthcare System, New Orleans, Medical Director Fernando Rivera
- Alexandria VA Medical Center, Alexandria, Medical Director Peter Dancy
- Overton Brooks VA Medical Center, Shreveport, Medical Director Richard Crockett

On July 19, 2023, in conjunction with the Governor's Office, we unveiled the Heritage Monument in honor of Louisiana's African-American service members throughout America's history, from the freedmen (formerly enslaved) soldiers who fought for the Union and in the Siege of Port Hudson to the more than 80,000 African-American veterans currently living in Louisiana today. Sens. Gerald Boudreaux and Royce Duplessis sponsored SB 105 during the 2021 Regular Session, which became Act 432, providing for the establishment of the monument in the park. The monument stands 7 feet high by 12 feet wide, is cast in bronze, rests on limestone and weighs approximately 20,000 pounds. It features a cast of military heroes through the ages, beginning with America's revolutionary war and reaching forward through time to America's newest military branch, the United States Space Force.

Also annually in September, LDVA hosts the Gold Star Mothers and Families Recognition Ceremony at the Gold Star Monument in the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park. The monument stands to honor Gold Star mothers and families, preserve the memory of the fallen and as a stark reminder that freedom is not free. The park serves as the backdrop for the stunning black granite statue standing as a tribute to Gold Star mothers and families featuring a cut out representation of their loved ones. We work with the leadership from all three Louisiana chapters of the Blue Star Mothers to reach Louisiana's Gold Star mothers and families.

In 2023, Gov. Edwards joined LDVA for the Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration on Wednesday, March 29, Vietnam War Veterans Day, at the River Center in Baton Rouge to honor Louisiana's more than 85,000 Vietnam era veterans and their families. The event was a huge success with 750 Vietnam veterans, family members and veteran supporters in attendance, and it was said that it was the largest gathering of Vietnam veterans ever in our state. Guests were able to view exhibits of Vietnam memorabilia and browse resource booths, and Vietnam veterans received a commemorative Vietnam 50th anniversary challenge coin. Staff from LSU's T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History was also on hand to discuss and conduct oral histories of veterans.

# Challenges Met

## 2016 Floods

During the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature, Rep. James Armes authored HB 988 which opened up the Military Family Assistance Fund (MFAF) to all veterans. The MFAF is a needs-based financial assistance program, governed by state statute, and its board can award up to \$10,000 per year to a veteran with no repayment necessary. The fund helps veterans cure default on mortgage or vehicle payments, make repairs to their home or vehicle and other needs as approved. Rep. Armes' bill, Act 185, allowed LDVA to provide approximately 1,000 veterans with \$350 each to assist with helping them get back on their feet after the 2016 flood.

In addition to assisting veterans through the MFAF, our Louisiana Veterans Home in Jackson admitted eight veterans after the flood. The home's staff visited several shelters, including the LSU Field House shelter and Celtic Studios evacuation shelter, to help veterans find placement. This outreach was conducted in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Health.

## COVID-19

Louisiana faced unprecedented times with the arrival of COVID-19 in March of 2020, and the pandemic affected our operations across the department. We worked with the Governor's Office, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and the Louisiana National Guard (LANG), specifically with regards to our five state-run veterans homes.

LDVA operates five veterans homes located in Jackson, Monroe, Bossier City, Reserve and Jennings, which operate under the regulations set forth by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). From the onset of the pandemic, our office followed the guidelines from CMS, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and LDH. LDVA staff were in constant contact with LDH staff to set up testing and vaccinations, and our homes were the first long-term care facilities in the state to begin both. GOHSEP staff and LANG personnel also played an integral part in supplying our homes with PPE and delivering it on many occasions.

While college campuses primarily operated remotely during the pandemic, LDVA's LaVetCorps Navigators were still serving student veterans. Shelia Revell, Navigator at the Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College (NLTCC), launched a partnership in the communities surrounding NLTCC with a goal of vaccinating as many northwest Louisiana residents as possible. The five-month project yielded 1,786 vaccinations, and for her work, Shelia was awarded the AmeriCorps Champion of Service Award for the State of Louisiana from Volunteer Louisiana.

## Severe Weather Response

Weather events affect the daily lives of Louisianans across our state, and this includes the lives of our veterans who live in our five state-run veterans homes. Over the years, several of our homes have admitted veterans who lost their homes due to Hurricanes Harvey, Laura and Ida. After Hurricane Ida, LDVA staff worked with federal VA staff to locate displaced veterans, validate their military service to determine eligibility for admissions and admit them to our Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home in Reserve.

After Hurricane Zeta, LDVA was able to assist a Ponchatoula veteran through the Military Family Assistance Fund in securing new, safe housing. The veteran's mobile home had sustained damage from a tree that fell during the hurricane, and he had been living in it with no air conditioning or heat. We worked with community supporters as well as veteran service organizations to cover the costs of purchasing and moving into his new mobile home.

LDVA has also benefited from assistance from our fellow cabinet agencies, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and the Louisiana National Guard (LANG). In response to Hurricane Ida, LANG personnel picked up and delivered a generator to the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home in Reserve after the home's generator failed. LANG personnel, as well as Corps of Engineers staff from New Orleans worked together to keep the generator fueled and running until other arrangements could be made to sustain power at the veterans home. After winter weather across the state, LDWF staff worked with our veterans homes to coordinate transportation for staff from their homes to our veterans homes. The availability of our veterans homes' staff is critical due to the around-the-clock care given to our residents.

# Leaving Louisiana Better Than We Found It

## Training

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs has veterans service offices in all 64 parishes, with eight parishes having multiple offices. These offices are staffed by LDVA's accredited veterans assistance counselors (VACs) who work with veterans to connect them with the benefits they have earned and file claims on their behalf to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Our VACs are veterans themselves, so they are uniquely qualified to be subject matter experts on benefits.

LDVA focused greatly over the past eight years on improving and updating our accreditation and training process for our more than 60 VACs as a model our department will keep over the coming decades. LDVA employs a benefits training and development program manager, also a veteran and former VAC, to provide training to new and existing VACs. When a new VAC is hired, they will complete VAC on-the-job training for 12 weeks as an onboarding process. In addition to this training, LDVA provides annual training where all VACs come together as a whole as well as annual week-long regional trainings for a total of 80 hours per year. Trainings include information on changes to compensation, pension, burial, education for veterans and dependents, debt management and state benefits such as Title 29 education benefits and tax exemptions. VACs also receive additional training on topics such as the PACT Act and other new initiatives.

## Southwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs authorized the State of Louisiana to construct five veterans cemeteries. The cemeteries are a final resting place of honor for veterans, their spouses and dependents. Each cemetery offers burial sites for in-ground casketed and cremated remains, and above-ground cremated remains. LDVA's five state-run veterans cemeteries are located in Leesville, Rayville, Keithville, Slidell and Jennings.

On March 6, 2020, Gov. John Bel Edwards and LDVA Secretary Joey Strickland dedicated the Southwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Jennings. The cemetery is built on 20 acres of land located behind the Southwest Louisiana Veterans Home in Jennings. Currently, approximately 10 acres of land are in use with several other phases planned for the future. The cemetery offers 1,212 pre-placed, double-occupancy, concrete in-ground vaults for casketed interments; 185 sites for in-ground cremains; and 380 niches in the columbarium walls. On May 7, 2020, Marine SGT Ted Cox Sr. was the first to be interred, and the first committal service was held on June 11, 2020 for Army SP4 Ed Gary.

## LSU Law Center Veterans Law Clinic

The first-ever LSU Law Center Veterans Law Clinic began on Jan. 13, 2023 in partnership with LDVA with four students participating, two veterans and two civilians. LDVA is proud to have worked with the LSU Law Center's Assistant Dean of Experiential Education Robert Lancaster to create a program that will partner students in this clinic with LDVA's Appeals Office staff who regularly represent veterans at no charge in their hearings before the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) when veterans challenge the federal VA's decisions on compensation and pension.

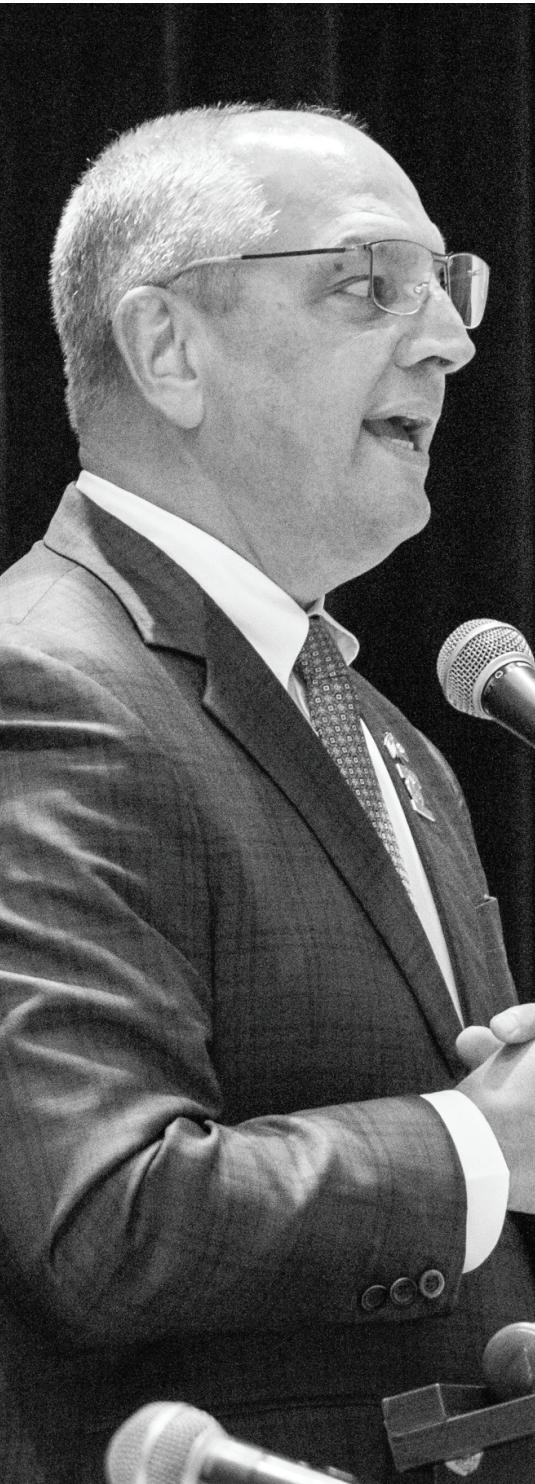
The 14-week class provides each student an understanding of what a veteran is, the purpose of the federal VA's disability compensation and service connection ratings, the various possible outcomes of claims veterans or their dependents file and how to advocate in a BVA appeals hearing for a veteran whose compensation claims were denied. LDVA's executive counsel, as well as LDVA's benefits training and development program manager and appeals director, led the classroom instruction of the students. LDVA believes that this historic legal clinic's beginning represents an investment in future attorneys and judges who will be better prepared in their legal practices to serve and honor our veterans.

## National Veterans Legal Services Program

The National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) is an independent, non-profit veterans service organization founded in 1981 that represents veterans on claims for benefits before the federal VA, and on appeals before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) of decisions denying benefits made by the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA), all at no cost to the claimant. NVLSP also provides advocacy training on a national basis to service officers who represent claimants before the federal VA. Since 2007, NVLSP has operated a pro bono program called Lawyers Serving Warriors® (LSW), in which NVLSP trains and mentors VA-accredited attorneys employed by major private law firms to provide legal representation, at no cost, to veterans before federal agencies, including the federal VA.

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs partnered with NVLSP to elevate the level of training provided to our accredited veterans assistance counselors (VACs), and to provide veterans with a cost-free option to appeal their claim denial from the BVA. The quality of representation provided to claimants by our VACs before the federal VA regional offices and the BVA will be strengthened through advocacy training by NVLSP in federal VA benefits law, including the impact of CAVC decisions, changes in statutes, regulations and federal VA directives, and how VACs can use these legal authorities to the advantage of veterans.

LDVA's VACs represent thousands of veterans annually filing claims on their behalf to the federal VA for compensation and pension, and some cases are denied and go before the BVA. Through LDVA's partnership with NVLSP, if a veteran's claim is denied by BVA, we will forward that information to NVLSP for an analysis to determine if any errors were made. If NVLSP's lawyers review the case and determine errors were made, NVLSP will represent the veteran at no cost.



# Stories of Our Success

# 05

## Benefits—Darlene Graves

Louisiana is unique in many ways, and that applies to veterans affairs as well. Unlike many states who may not have many staff members to connect veterans with the benefits they have earned, LDVA trains and accredits veterans assistance counselors (VACs) who work in 74 veteran service offices across our state. These VACs file claims to the federal VA on behalf of veterans, and in 2022, they brought in more than \$1.6 million in compensation and pension claims to Louisiana veterans and their families. Typically, LDVA accredited VACs bring in this amount annually for Louisiana veterans. This is money that veterans in turn will spend in their communities which bolsters their local economy.

Darlene Graves is the regional manager over VAC offices for the southeast region and works out of the St. Tammany Parish office in Slidell. While

reviewing old office files, Darlene discovered a Vietnam veteran's death certificate with hypertension as one of the causes of death. She made attempts to contact the surviving spouse by phone, but got no answer nor voicemail. Darlene found her address in the file, which was only a few blocks away from the office, and she went there to speak to her.

The veteran died on Dec. 3, 2005. The surviving spouse first applied for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) on March 27, 2009, but was denied. With the passing of the PACT Act on Aug. 10, 2022, Darlene submitted paperwork to re-open the surviving spouse's application for DIC on Sept. 27, 2022. She worked with the federal VA on behalf of the surviving spouse until DIC was approved retroactively from April 1, 2009 resulting in an initial retroactive payment of more than \$200,000.

## LaVetCorps—Tammy Armond

LDVA's LaVetCorps Navigators, our student veteran leaders, support student veterans on 32 public and private university campuses across Louisiana. Their primary goal is to provide resources and support to these student veterans helping them transition from their military service to civilian life while they pursue their higher education goals. Our Navigators also work with other LDVA staff such as our veterans assistance counselors to connect student veterans with the benefits they have earned in addition to financial assistance through our Military Family Assistance Fund and other outreach initiatives.

Tammy Armond is our Navigator at Fletcher Technical Community College in Schriever where she has served for two years. She will begin her third year of service in the 2023-2024 academic year. In November of 2021, Tammy received a call from a veteran who wanted to enroll under the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP). VRRAP was

enacted on March 11, 2021 as part of the American Rescue Plan. Eligible veterans participating in VRRAP were able to receive up to 12 months of tuition and fees and a monthly housing allowance based on Post-9/11 GI Bill rates.

At the time of the veteran's call, Fletcher did not offer the program; however, Tammy spoke to admissions staff about how they could participate. The veteran went ahead and enrolled in the nursing program with the intention of paying for her education out of her own pocket. At the beginning of the semester, Tammy followed up with admissions taking the VRRAP application to them. In February of 2022, Fletcher was approved for the program, and Tammy was able to communicate this to the veteran. The veteran was so appreciative and had been considering dropping out due to a lack of funding, but was then able to complete her degree through VRRAP.

## Veterans Homes—Overton Brooks

In November of 2022, the admissions staff at the Northeast Louisiana Veterans Home in Monroe were contacted by staff at Overton Brooks Medical Center, a federal VA hospital in Shreveport. A veteran who had previously lived at Woody's Home for Veterans in Shreveport was admitted to Overton Brooks due to his medical state. He stayed at Overton Brooks for seven months because the staff were not able to locate any family members or a safe place for him to reside as he had been diagnosed with dementia.

After four months of working with doctors and social workers from Overton Brooks, as well as the judicial commitment process, the veteran was admitted to the Monroe veterans home in February of 2023. When the veteran arrived, he was so happy to be able to enjoy the outdoors again and have the opportunity to fish off of the pier on Bayou DeSiard. This veteran is still a resident at the home, and is doing very well.

# BY THE NUMBERS

# 06

## Benefits:

- Veterans LDVA served in FY23: **100,228**
- LDVA VAC-filed claims in FY23: **132,242**
- Compensation and pension to veterans in FY22: **\$1,662,875**
- Appeals LDVA assisted veterans with in FY23: **301**
- Retroactive payments LDVA Appeals Office brought in for Louisiana veterans in FY23: **\$2,263,930**

## LDVA Cemeteries:

- Veteran and veteran spouse interments since 2015: **6,890**
- Indigent veteran interments since 2015: **126**
- Veteran dependent interments since 2015: **1,650**

## Louisiana Honor Medals:

- Medals LDVA awarded since 2015: **13,787**

## LDVA Veteran Homes:

- Veteran residents since 2015: **3,366**
- Veteran spouse residents since 2015: **107**

## LaVetCorps:

- Navigators since program began in 2019: **76**
- Navigators with more than one year of service since program began in 2019: **31**
- Navigator service hours since program began in 2019: **127,200**
- Grant money awarded since program began in 2019: **\$1,356,400**

## Military Family Assistance Fund:

- Total number of veterans helped since 2015: **1,176**
- Total dollar amount awarded to veterans since 2015: **\$1,104,299.91**

## State Approving Agency housed within LDVA:

- Total number of currently active schools and training establishments in Louisiana accepting GI Bill payments: **244**
- Total dollar amount of economic impact of federal VA educational benefits paid to Louisiana colleges/schools and students: **More than \$150 million annually**

## LDVA's Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration:

- 750 veterans, family members and veteran supporters in attendance

## LDVA Facebook page

- Growth since 2015: **4,700**

## LDVA Constant Contact

- Outreach email subscribers growth since 2015: **3,991**

## Human Resources

- Total number of current LDVA employees: **850**





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