



**JAN-MAR 2021
NEWSLETTER**

OUR MISSION

Easton Veterans' Services is here to inform and assist Easton veterans and their families in the navigation of applicable local, state, and federal benefits.

OUR STAFF

Cory Ahonen

Deputy Director of Health and Community Services– Financial and Veterans' Services

Lisa O'Hearne

Administrative Assistant

Sean Butrica

VA Work Study

A Note From The VSO

Hello and Happy New Year to you and your family. I hope this latest edition of the Reveille finds you well and having had a nice Holiday season despite the challenges we have faced as a community this past year.

I wanted to take a moment to remind each of you how important it is that we check in on one another and continue to support and care for our neighbors, now more than ever. Just like when we were serving, check your people to the left and to the right and make sure they are taken care of. If you find someone in need, please refer them to me and I will be glad to help utilize the great resources that we have available in our community.

Lastly, I want to remind you all that The Veterans Discretionary Fund is available to assist our veterans in need of support and we are always accepting donations of gift cards, or check/money order. 100% of the donations go to help our veterans in Easton. Since the beginning of this pandemic, earlier last year, we have distributed over \$4k worth of support to our veterans and their families.

Please help us continue to provide this great service to our community by donating today. Donations can be mailed to: Easton Veterans Services, 15 Barrows Street- N. Easton, MA 02356. Thank you for your support and loyalty to our cause. I look forward to a positive year ahead.

Sincerely,
Cory Ahonen

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PICTURED ABOVE 'A Time To Honor'

This book has been generously provided, free of charge, from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services. Please call us today to reserve your copy, you've earned it. On behalf of the Town of Easton, we thank our Vietnam veterans and their families for their selfless service and sacrifice to our country. WELCOME HOME!



15 Barrows Street, Easton, MA 02356



(508) 230-0690



cahonen@easton.ma.us



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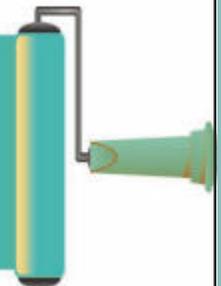
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UPDATES FOR YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS



Above: VA releases order of veterans, staff to be vaccinated.

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs released a final plan Tuesday detailing the order in which veterans and staff will receive coronavirus vaccines as doses become more widely available.

The VA is undertaking a plan to distribute vaccines to more than 418,000 employees and 10 million enrolled patients — a task one VA official called a “Herculean effort.” The department received 73,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine this week and vaccinated its first patient Monday — a 96-year-old World War II veteran living in the department’s long-term community living center in Massachusetts



Above: During season of giving, Red Cross urges blood donation

Hospitals need donations of all blood types so shelves remain stocked to meet patient blood needs.

Make your appointment to give blood, platelets or plasma with the Red Cross by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org), calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

To encourage donations this holiday season, those who come to donate blood, platelets or plasma with the Red Cross Dec. 18-Jan. 4 will receive a long-sleeved Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.



VA recently enhanced several IT systems to stay ahead of the surge in the demand for video appointments. This comes as record numbers of Veterans and their families opted for virtual medical appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic. VA’s Office of Information and Technology (OIT) quintupled the capacity of its primary telehealth system, VA Video Connect, to allow more clinicians and patients to conduct remote appointments simultaneously.

As a result, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) clinicians now conduct close to 30,000 telehealth video appointments a day, compared to fewer than 2,500 video appointments each day in January and February.



THE EASTON FOOD PANTRY

Since 1978, The Easton Food Pantry has been dedicated to providing food to our neighbors in times of need. The Easton Food Pantry is located at 136 Elm Street, North Easton. Distribution hours are on Mondays 12pm-3:30pm. If you are in need or interested in volunteering, *please call 508-230-0670.*

Are you missing out on benefits?
Make an appointment today!



YOUR BENEFITS: ARE YOU USING THEM?

ANNUITY FOR MA VETERANS AND FAMILIES

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provided an annuity to 100% service connected disabled veterans, or to the parents, and or un-remarried spouses (Gold Star) of men and women who gave their lives in the service of their country during wartime. To apply, contact your VSO or visit mass.gov/veterans

BONUSES

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides a one-time Welcome Home bonus to eligible veterans who served during wartime from World War II through OPERATIONS Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Call 617.210.5927 for the Persian Gulf War Bonus. For all other bonuses, contact the Office of the State Treasurer 617.367.3900, ext. 543, or for OEF/OIF ext. 539

MOTOR VEHICLE BENEFITS

The Registry of Motor Vehicles now offers the option of having a "Veteran" designation added to licenses upon renewal. The RMV also pro-vides a variety of veterans' license plates and a registration exemption for certain veteran. Call 617.351.9222 or see massrmv.com. Certain disabled veterans and former POWs are eligible for motor vehicle sales and excise tax exemptions. Contact the Dept. of Revenue at 617.887.6367.

THE EASTON VETERANS DISCRETIONARY FUND is used to sustain daily living for Easton veterans. If you would like to donate or are in need of assistance, please contact the VSO.

DISABILITY COMPENSATION

Federal disability compensation is one of the most common benefits provided by the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA). For additional information visit the Compensation and Pension Benefits section of the VA website at: www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/.

Soldiers' Homes

The Soldiers' Homes in Chelsea 617.884.5660 and Holyoke 413.532.9475 provides a variety of services to veterans, such as acute hospital, domiciliary, and long-term care; physical and occupational therapy and more.

VET CENTERS

Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling, outreach, and referral services to veterans and their families in a relaxed, community based setting. Vet Centers also provide counseling for military sexual trauma and bereavement to parents, siblings, and spouses. Locations include Boston, Brockton, Hyannis, Lowell, New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester. For more information visit: www.vetcenter.va.gov

SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides service for veterans in crisis. Call 1.800.273.8255 and press 1 to be connected immediately to VA suicide prevention and mental health professionals. Visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

MASSACHUSETTS SAVE PROGRAM

Statewide Advocacy for Veterans' Empowerment (SAVE) program that assists veterans in need of referral services and seeks to prevent suicide and advocate on behalf of Massachusetts' veterans. Toll-free 1.888.844.2838, save@state.ma.us

HOME BASE PROGRAM

Home Base Program is a partnership between the Red Sox Foundation and Mass General Hospital that offers OEF/ OIF veterans & their families diagnostic assessments, treatment & referral services To learn more about the program call 617.724.5202 or homebaseprogram@partnership.org

BURIAL AND MEMORIAL BENEFITS

Most veterans are entitled to state and federal burial benefits and other memorial services. To locate the burial site of a veteran use the VA National Gravesite Locator at [http:// gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1](http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1).

VA OPERATED CEMETERIES

Massachusetts National Cemetery
Bourne, MA 508.563.7113
Woodland Cemetery Soldiers' Lot
Harvard St., Ayer, MA 01432

GRAVE MARKERS AND HEADSTONES

The VA will provide markers or headstones for eligible veterans buried in private cemeteries at no cost to the veteran or his or her family.

CHAPTER 115 BENEFITS

Chapter 115 provides a needs based means tested program of financial and medical assistance for indigent veterans and their dependents. Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, housing supplies and medical care. These benefits are available for dependents of deceased veterans as well.

Education Benefits

A variety of programs available ranging from MA Veterans Tuition Waiver to GI Bill (Forever GI Bill), Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation, and Ch. 35 (Dependents of 100% disabled Veterans).

STANDING NOTICES

CH. 115 BENEFITS FOR VETERANS AND SURVIVING SPOUSES

You may be eligible for Ch. 115 benefits if you are a veteran or surviving spouse of a veteran with a single income below \$2,081/month and assets below \$5k or if you are a married veteran with income below \$2,818 and assets below \$9,800. Ask your VSO for more details if you may be close to these amounts. This benefit may help with monthly medical and dental costs as well as a monetary benefit to help cover costs necessary to daily living.

THE EASTON VETERANS DISCRETIONARY FUND

accepts donations and provides assistance and gift cards to Easton veterans in need for items and services needed to sustain daily living. If you, or someone you know, are in need please contact: Cory Ahonen, VSO, to find out more about this fund. 508-230-0690.

VA launches Single Access Point to all VA Contact Centers

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today, the formal launch of 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411), a single access point to all VA contact centers. The number is available 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year to serve Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. Responding to Veteran feedback on the challenges of knowing the right number for VA assistance, 1-800-MyVA411, serves all members of the Veteran community seeking information or help. Veterans and their families can still reach the Veterans Crisis Line directly at 1-800-273-8255 and pressing 1, by Chat or by texting 838255. The White House VA Hotline is also still available at 1-855-948-2311 for Veterans and their families to share compliments and concerns.

SNAP (FOOD ASSISTANCE)

Please call the MA Department of Transitional Assistance at 877-382-2363 and ask to learn more about what type of assistance may be available for you.

MEMORIES...MEMORIES...MEMORIES

Easton Veterans' Services is offering an opportunity for veterans to preserve a cherished memory in print. Stan Siegel, U.S. Army veteran of The Korean War Era, will transform your words and pictures into your own personal or family memoir. Stan is a former Executive Director of The East Norwalk Association Library and now lives in Easton. To begin your journey backward stop by the Easton Veterans' Services office to get your guide to help you start your story in words and pictures. This service is free to anyone who may be interested. Please call 508-230-0690 for more information.

AT&T added to VA Video Connect telehealth program

Veterans using the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) VA Video Connect app on their mobile phones through AT&T's cellular network will no longer incur data charges when using this video telehealth technology to connect and meet with their VA health care providers and teams.

AT&T joins T-Mobile, Safelink by TracFone and Verizon in supporting Veterans' ability to video conference with their VA care providers on their smartphone, tablet or computer from any location with an internet connection.



MILITARY HONORS AT FUNERAL

The Department of Defense "Honoring Those Who Served" program provides dignified military funeral honors to veterans. To arrange military funeral honors, contact your local funeral home.

DEATH PENSION

The VA provides pensions to low-income surviving spouses and unmarried children of deceased veterans with wartime service.

REPLACEMENT MEDALS, AWARDS, AND DECORATIONS

Veterans and their families may obtain replacements for lost medals or other decorations awarded to the veteran. Requests can be submitted online at www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/.

EDUCATION BENEFITS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Many State and Federal programs are



AIRMAN WHO PROTECTED FALLEN GREEN BERET DURING ISIS FIGHT RECEIVES AIR FORCE CROSS



Above: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alaxey Germanovich receives the Air Force Cross for Gallantry.

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. -- Secretary of the Air Force Barbara Barrett will be presenting the Air Force Cross to a Special Tactics Airman during a ceremony at 11:30 a.m. MST at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, Dec.10, 2020. U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alaxey Germanovich, an ST combat controller with the 26th Special Tactics Squadron, 24th Special Operations Wing, Air Force Special Operations Command, will be awarded the nation's second highest medal for gallantry against an armed enemy of the U.S. in combat. On April 8, 2017, Germanovich was attached to a team of Army Special Forces and Afghan Commandos while on a mission to clear a well-fortified valley in Nangahar Province, Afghanistan supporting Operation FREEDOM's SENTINEL.

During an enemy ambush, Gemanovich repeatedly exposed himself to sniper and machine gun fire while directing numerous danger close airstrikes from an AFSOC AC-130 gunship within 35 meters of his position.

With the team expending all of their rifle ammunition and grenades, they drew their pistols in an attempt to suppress the advancing enemy. Germanovich directed his team's withdrawal, then traversed 700 meters carrying a casualty up a mountain to a helicopter landing zone while directing close air support. Germanovich is credited for the protection of over 150 friendly forces and the destruction of 11 enemy fighting positions over the course of the eight-hour battle.

The Air Force Cross is second only to the Medal of Honor and is given to members of the armed forces who display extraordinary heroism while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States. With this honor, Staff Sgt. Germanovich becomes the 12th Special Tactics Airman to receive the Air Force Cross since 9/11. Special Tactics is the Air Force's most highly decorated community since the Vietnam War specializing in global access, precision strike, personnel recovery and battlefield surgery. Since 9/11, Special Tactics Airmen have received one Medal of Honor, 12 Air Force Crosses and 50 Silver Star Medals.

YOUR LOCAL VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

ROLL CALL

VFW Post 2547

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm

American Legion Post 7

Meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month.

Dinner at 6pm, meeting 7-8pm

Where:

148 Allen Road, N. Easton

Note: Meeting status has been affected by COVID-19. Please be aware that meetings are subject to change during this time.



Please note that The Easton Reveille is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by any federal, state, or local government agency. Easton Veterans' Services has compiled this information from a variety of sources

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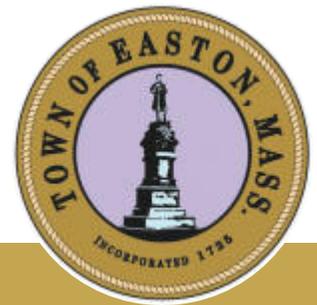


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FRONT AND CENTER

In this edition of the Reveille, we would like to call Army Veteran, Elizabeth Riley front and center.

Elizabeth is the current Service Officer for the American Legion Post 7. She is also the Brockton Chapter Director of the Business Owners Association (VBOA) and has been recently recognized for her 5 years of excellent service.

Ms. Riley has been the longest serving director of the organization, which is a non-profit that has provided training, mentorship and many other resources to assist veterans in starting their own businesses.

For her outstanding service she was presented a plaque and an inspirational citation from the assistant chapter director, Earnest Smith. Elizabeth, we thank you for your service and your dedication to continuing to serve our veterans. You are a true Patriot and an asset to our community.

If you know someone who you would like included in our 'Front and Center' section, please let the VSO know!



EASTON VETERANS DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Veterans Discretionary Fund is reserved for the purchase or reimbursement of expenses required to sustain daily living for any veteran who is a resident of Easton, MA. If you would like to donate please contact us at 508-230-0690 x3.

Please send thoughts, suggestions, and ideas to:
Cahonen@easton.ma.us
or call 508-230-0690 x3