



Great Plains Veterans Services Center

"Veterans helping Veterans for a better future"

GPVSC IS HOSTING ITS FIRST VETERANS STAND DOWN

Thursday, July 14th, 2022

10am- 2pm

Northern Winz Casino

11276 US- 87, Box Elder, MT 59521

FREE EVENT FOR ALL COMMUNITY VETERANS
AND THEIR FAMILIES

No registration fee for participants or vendors

Sponsored by: GPVSC and Northern Winz Hotel & Casino

Questions call Rebecca Lewis

(406) 395-5610; rlewis@gpvsc.org

July
2022

NEWSLETTER

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American Legion Post 67 Meeting

At Northern Winz Casino
11275 US-87, Box Elder, MT 59521

**Tuesday
July 12th
6:00pm**

GREAT PLAINS VETERANS SERVICES CENTER "THE BIG ONE" POW WOW RAFFLE DRAWING ON AUGUST 7TH

1ST PRIZE \$10,000	2ND PRIZE \$5,000	3RD PRIZE \$3,000
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RAFFLE TICKET PRICES:

\$20 EACH

\$50 FOR 3 TICKETS

\$100 FOR 8 TICKETS

RULES:

1. Players need not be present to win.
2. Prizes must be claimed physically by the winner.

Support the Great Plains Veterans Services Center and Donate



Non-Veteran-
\$20.00

Veteran-
\$15.00

American Legion
Post Member-
\$13.00



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FACEBOOK AND
INSTAGRAM PAGES
FOR UPCOMING BBQ'S
AND OTHER EVENTS.**

SUN SAFETY IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

It's important to protect your skin from sun damage throughout the year, no matter the weather. Sun exposure can cause sunburn, skin aging (such as skin spots, wrinkles, or "leathery skin"), eye damage, and skin cancer, the most common of all cancers.

Skin cancer is on the rise in the U.S. The National Cancer Institute SEER Program projects there will be 106,110 new cases of skin melanomas and 7,180 deaths in 2021.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. In 2018, there were an estimated 1.3 million people living with melanoma of the skin in the U.S. About 4.3 million people are treated for basal cell cancer and squamous cell skin cancer in the U.S. every year, according to a report from the Office of the Surgeon General.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration continues to evaluate sunscreen products to ensure that they are safe and effective and so that available sunscreens help protect consumers from sunburn and, for broad spectrum products with sun protection factor (SPF) values of at least 15, from skin cancer and early skin aging caused by the sun when used as directed with other sun protection measures.

Lower Your Risk for Sunburn, Skin Cancer, and Early Skin Aging. Sun damage to the body is caused by invisible ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Sunburn is a type of skin damage caused by the sun. Tanning is also a sign of the skin reacting to potentially damaging UV radiation by producing additional pigmentation that provides it with some, but often not enough, protection against sunburn.

Spending time in the sun increases your risk of skin cancer and early skin aging. People of all skin colors are at risk for this damage. You can reduce your risk by:

Limiting your time in the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when the sun's rays are most intense.

Wearing clothing to cover skin exposed to the sun, such as long-

sleeve shirts, pants, sunglasses, and broad-brim hats. Sun-protective clothing is now available. (The FDA regulates these products only if they are intended to be used for medical purposes.)

Using broad spectrum sunscreens with a SPF value of 15 or higher regularly and as directed. (Broad spectrum sunscreens offer protection against both UVA and UVB rays, two types of the sun's ultraviolet radiation.) Reading the label to ensure you use your sunscreen correctly. Consulting a health care professional before applying sunscreen to infants younger than 6 months.

In general, the FDA recommends that you use broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, even on cloudy days.

Apply sunscreen liberally to all uncovered skin, especially your nose, ears, neck, hands, feet, and lips (but avoid putting it inside your mouth and eyes). Reapply at least every two hours. Apply more often if you're swimming or sweating. (Read the label for your specific sunscreen. An average-size adult or child needs at least one ounce of sunscreen, about the amount it takes to fill a shot glass, to evenly cover the body.) If you don't have much hair, apply sunscreen to the top of your head or wear a hat. No sunscreen completely blocks UV radiation. So other protections are needed, such as protective clothing, sunglasses, and staying in the shade. No sunscreen is waterproof. Sunscreen is available as lotions, creams, sticks, gels, oils, butters, pastes, and sprays. Sunscreen products in forms including wipes, towelettes, body washes, and shampoos that are marketed without an FDA-approved application remain subject to regulatory action.

Read Sunscreen Labels: Although UVB rays are the primary cause of sunburn, both UVA and UVB rays contribute to skin cancer. All sunscreens help protect against sunburn. But only those that are broad spectrum have been shown to also reduce the risk of skin cancer and early skin aging caused

by the sun when used as directed with other sun protection measures. Current requirements applicable to sunscreens marketed without approved applications state:

Products that pass the FDA's broad-spectrum requirements can be labeled "broad spectrum."

Sunscreens that are not broad spectrum or that lack an SPF of at least 15 must carry a warning: "Skin Cancer/Skin Aging Alert: Spending time in the sun increases your risk of skin cancer and early skin aging. This product has been shown only to help prevent sunburn, not skin cancer or early skin aging."

Water resistance claims, for 40 or 80 minutes, tell how much time you can expect to get the labeled SPF-level of protection while swimming or sweating.

Manufacturers may not make claims that their sunscreens are "waterproof" or "sweat proof." Products may not be identified as "sunblocks" or claim instant protection or protection for more than two hours without reapplying.

Risk Factors for Harmful Effects of UV Radiation

People of all skin colors are potentially at risk for sunburn and other harmful effects of UV radiation, so always protect yourself. Be especially careful if you have: pale skin, blond, red, or light brown hair, been treated for skin cancer, if a family member who has had skin cancer. If you take medications, ask your health care professional about sun-care precautions.

Some medications may increase sun sensitivity. Even on an overcast day, up to 80 percent of the sun's UV rays can get through the clouds. Stay in the shade as much as possible. The FDA is committed to ensuring that safe and effective sunscreen products are available for consumer use. Because the body of scientific evidence linking UVA exposure to skin cancers and other harms has grown significantly in recent years, in a 2019 proposed rule on sunscreens, the FDA recommended a new requirement that all sunscreen products with SPF values of 15 and above must

be broad spectrum, and that as the SPF of these products increases, broad spectrum protection increases as well. The FDA also proposed changes to the labeling of SPF values to make it easier for consumers to compare and choose sunscreen, and to raising the maximum proposed SPF value from SPF 50+ to SPF 60+.

Protect Your Eyes With Sunglasses: Sunlight reflecting off sand, water, or even snow, further increases exposure to UV radiation and increases your risk of developing eye problems. Certain sunglasses can help protect your eyes.

When using sunglasses: Choose sunglasses with a UV400 rating or "100% UV protection" on the label. These sunglasses block more than 99% of UVA and UVB radiation and provide the most protection against UV rays. Do not mistake dark-tinted sunglasses as having UV protection. The darkness of the lens does not indicate its ability to shield your eyes from UV rays. Many sunglasses with light-colored tints – such as green, amber, red, and gray – can offer the same UV protection as very dark lenses. Check to see if your tinted glasses have UV protection. If you are unsure, your eye care professional may be able to check for you. When you wear tinted glasses, your pupils dilate and can increase exposure of your retinas to UV light. Without UV protection, you are putting yourself at risk to harmful effects associated with solar radiation. Be aware that children should wear sunglasses that indicate the UV protection level. Toy sunglasses may not have UV protection; so be sure to look for the UV protection label. Consider large, wraparound-style frames, which may provide more UV protection because they cover the entire eye socket. Know that pricier sunglasses don't ensure greater UV protection. Even if you wear UV absorbing contact lenses, wear quality sunglasses that offer UV protection.

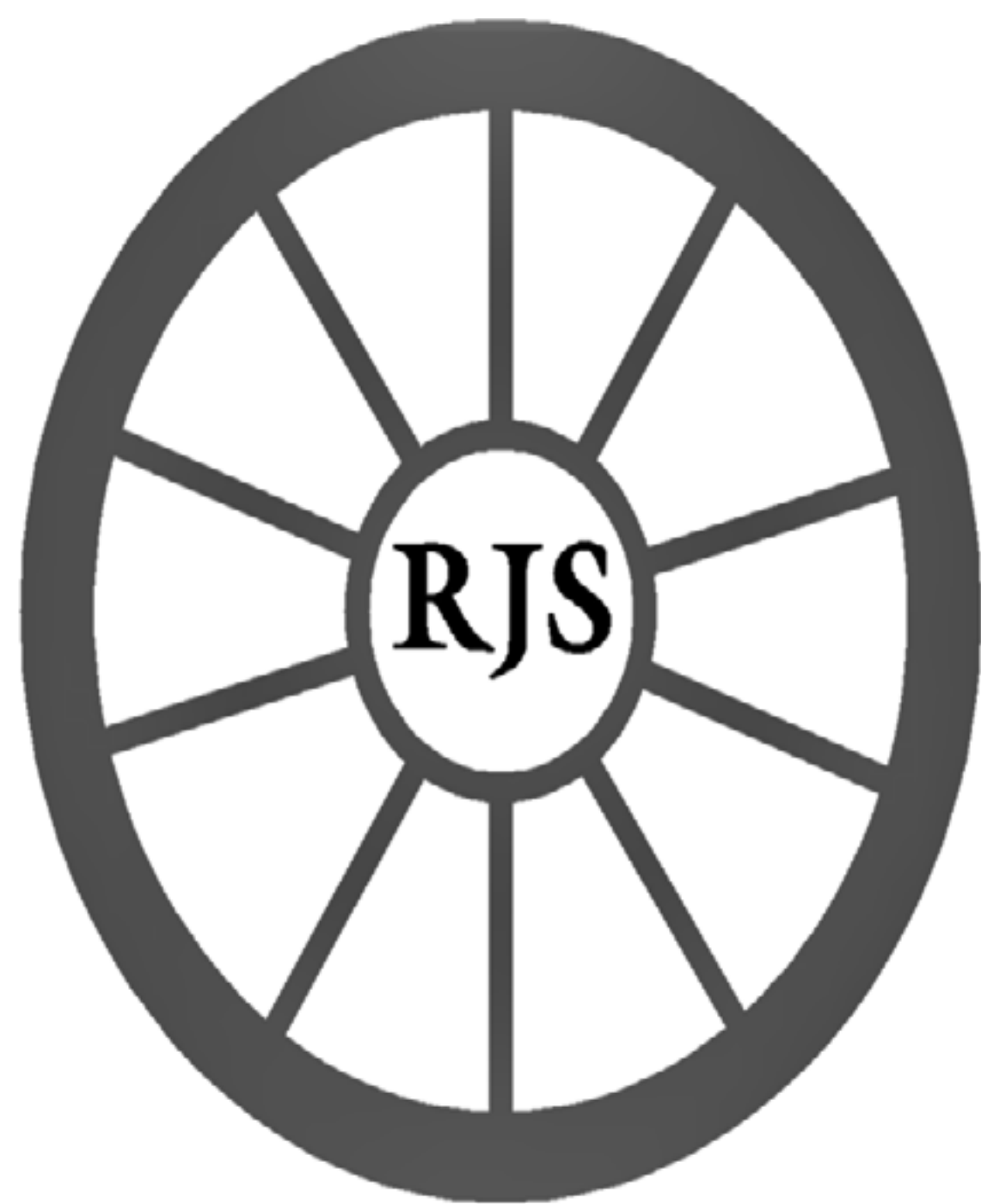
Even when you wear sunglasses, wearing a wide-brim hat and sunscreen can help further protect you from sun exposure.

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**ARMY LOOKS AT HOW NEW SOLDIERS
ARE WELCOMED ACROSS THE FORCE**

beginning in October, with a goal of easing PCS transitions for both new and experienced soldiers alike.

Special inspections are IG investigations that aim to identify the causes of systemic issues, according to the Army's IG regulations. They are not intended to measure compliance with existing practices and standards but rather to evaluate the standards themselves.

According to flyers published ahead of a May visit to Fort Hood, Texas, the IG officials explained that they "intend to examine the new soldier's experience from initial entry training through their arrival at their initial duty assignment."

Through the rest of this year, the Department of the Army Inspector General will tour nearly 40 installations as part of a special inspection of the service's programs and efforts meant to help new soldiers arrive and adjust to their first duty stations, Army officials confirmed.

The inspection will include interview, surveys and focus groups across 38 installations, said Farrell. The flyer also noted that some installations will have town hall events. When inspectors visited Hood, they had a town hall for all first-term soldiers in the rank of specialist and below.

The "New Soldier Experience" special inspection has been ongoing since March, said Lt. Col. Randee Farrell, who is Army Secretary Christine Wormuth's public affairs advisor. Wormuth signed off last year on the "all-encompassing" inspection "of the Army's process to integrate new Soldiers into our ranks" after the IG recommended it, she added.

IG officials also published a link to two anonymous surveys: one for new soldiers and their family members, and one for company grade leaders who ultimately drive the experience of most of the service's new soldiers.

"Secretary Wormuth will review the final inspection report to find ways to improve how the Army trains, mentors, and integrates new Soldiers into effective and cohesive teams," said Farrell in an emailed statement.

The survey for the junior troops asks them to offer their thoughts on everything from their initial training experience, to sponsorship and in-processing at their first assignment, to whether their first-line leadership and access to benefits was conducive to their development as soldiers.

The service's senior leaders have been discussing the need to better integrate new soldiers into their first units as part of their People First and This is My Squad initiatives. Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston announced last year that the Army will establish permanent reception companies at major duty stations

According to the flyer, IG officials are also trying to identify the best practices that individual posts implement, so that they can be shared across the force.

VA EXPANDS LIVE DONOR CARE AND SUPPORT

The Department of Veterans Affairs implements a final rule, July 1, 2022, describing the authority to provide support for donation procedures and related care to those who donate an organ or bone marrow to Veterans for transplants.

Live donor support includes the following at no cost to the live donor, both in-house and in the community:
Initial screening, tests and studies necessary to qualify an interested individual as a live donor for a specific Veteran. Medical care and services related to the solid organ or bone marrow donation procedure. Post-donation follow-up, to include medical care and

services required to address reasonably foreseeable donor health complications resulting directly from the donation procedure for the period specified in the regulation.

Necessary travel and temporary lodging expenses, including those of one needed attendant or support person for the live donor, at rates prescribed in the regulation.

The final rule also highlights the informed consent rights of live donors, including the right to revoke their consent at any time and for any reason. Additionally, growing awareness and use of paired kidney donations or kidney donation chains in the private sector are

voluntary efforts that could benefit Veterans, and so these are specifically addressed in the final rule.

“The more live donors we have, the more the gift of life is given to the Veterans we serve,” said VA National Director of Clinical Services Manimegalai Murugavel D.N.P. “We know the availability of live organs and bone marrow does not meet the need for transplants nationwide. That’s why it’s important we find live donors to facilitate transplantation within a reasonably short time compared to the wait time of an organ from a deceased donor.”

As part of the integral care required by an eligible Veteran in need of a transplant, VA has offered solid organ transplant services since 1962 and bone marrow transplant services since 1982, including providing care and services for live donors donating a solid organ or bone marrow to a Veteran. On average, VA receives over 3,500 referrals for transplants each year and performs more than 480 solid organ and bone marrow transplant procedures including live donor transplantation.

Learn more about the VA National Transplant Program. The final rule is available at the Federal Register.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR VETERANS WHEN PICKING A COLLEGE

Jamie Schramm’s son and father-in-law served in the United States Marine Corps, so he understands the value of what veterans bring to civilian life after their time in the military is over. As an educator, he sees daily what they bring to college campuses across the country.

“Military veterans have that mindset that they want to serve, they want to help,” says Schramm, the campus executive officer for the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay’s satellite campuses in Sheboygan and Manitowoc. “And sometimes they have to be OK with us helping them, because they are in a new world for them.

“I find them very hard working, and they want to succeed, and this is another mission to them: Getting a college degree.”

The G.I. Bill, established in 1944, offers service members an opportunity for veterans to pursue higher education.

According to a 2021 report, 650,000 veterans used military benefits for higher education. The study by The Postsecondary National Policy Institute showed that 75 percent of the student

veterans enrolled as full-time students.

While the study shows that veterans are taking advantage of the benefits, they’re not always finding the move to higher education is a smooth transition. Finding a school that fits what a veteran wants to study and provides the proper infrastructure to help them with the process is essential for veterans to get the most out of their higher education.

“When they were in the military, there was a lot of certainty,” Schramm said. “They knew what they were going to do when they got up at 6 in the morning and knew when they went to bed at night. And now they’re in this different world where they need to ask a lot of questions.”

Schramm recently attended a U.S. Marine Corp. educator’s workshop where he was one of 45 educators from across the country with the goal of helping veterans obtain their academic goals. At the top of Schramm’s list of priorities for veterans is to find a school that has a veterans service coordinator whose sole mission is to help veterans through the process. “They need somebody embedded

in the student affairs area, who is academically advising the class selection, the financial aid areas, and someone who really understands our veterans’ backgrounds and what their military service might mean,” he said.

Veterans also need to consider the benefits campuses can offer, such as whether the college or university is considered veteran-friendly. Schramm points out that some of these designations are as simple as paying a fee, but others require meeting a set of criteria to earn the designation. Beyond the school’s designations, on-campus support extends to the kinds of groups on campus that are designed to provide support.

“Do they have a space like a veterans’ lounge where veterans can create a community?” Schramm said. “There’s the discipline of the military, and the whole training of the military, so it’s important that they can be around people that sound and feel a little bit like them.”

Perhaps the most important aspect of the process is choosing an educational path to take. This is where a coordinator can help steer

veterans toward an academic path based on their experiences in the military and what field of study they want to pursue.

“Make sure there’s something at the college you want to study,” he said. “Don’t settle. Don’t say, ‘It’s close enough. Go after something you really want. Someone who has great military training can sometimes get credits for some of the time and training they received in the military.”

Schools will also often provide educational opportunities or training for spouses, another consideration for selecting a school.

During his career in education in Wisconsin, Schramm has found that veterans often emerge as leaders in the business field. He feels a strong responsibility to help those who have volunteered to serve their country.

“If we can help them break down the barriers and create some communities in the veteran community and introduce them to the rest of the campus world, I think that can go a long way.”

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!



UV SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH: HOW TO STAY SAFE

Quality of care for Veteran's includes raising awareness around important health topics. By highlighting some of the national health awareness campaigns each month, Veterans can get ideas, information, and resources on a variety of health matters.

July is UV Safety Awareness Month and we're here to shed light on the risks associated with unprotected sun exposure and the things you can do to minimize your risk. As many of us get ready to enjoy those warm sunny days, we must remember to protect our skin and eyes from the damaging effects of the sun.

According to the CDC skin cancer is the leading type of cancer in the U.S., so it's important to educate ourselves on the risks associated with it.

The sun emits radiation known as UV-A and UV-B rays. Both types can damage your eyes and skin. UV-B rays have short wavelengths that reach the outer layer of your skin. UV-A rays have longer wavelengths that can penetrate the middle layer of your skin.

Unprotected sun exposure can:

- Cause vision problems and can damage

your eyes

- Suppress your immune system
- Prematurely age your skin
- Cause skin cancer

On the bright side of things there are things you can do to minimize the risk.

Cover Up: Wearing a Hat (preferably wide brimmed) or other shade-protective clothing can partly shield your skin from the harmful effects of UV ray exposure. Proper clothing may include long-sleeved shirts, pants, hats, and sunglasses - for eye protection.

Stay in the Shade: The sun's glare is strongest at midday. Staying in the shade between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. will further protect your skin. The sun can still damage your skin on cloudy days or in the winter. That's why it's important to stay protected throughout the year.

Choose the Right Sunscreen: This is extremely important. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) new regulations for sunscreen labeling recommend that your sunscreen have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, and should protect against both Ultraviolet A

(UV-A) and Ultraviolet B (UV-B) rays.

Use the Right Amount of Sunscreen: According to the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention, most people apply only 25-50 percent of the recommended amount of sunscreen. When out in the sun, it's important that you apply at least one ounce (a palmful) of sunscreen every two hours. You should apply it more often if you are sweating or swimming, even if the sunscreen is waterproof.

Examine your skin: Perform a head-to-toe exam once a month. Use a bright light, full length mirror, a hand mirror, and chairs/ stools. If you notice any worrisome spots, call your doctor.

See your physician: Get a professional skin exam at least once a year.

By taking the proper precautions and following these guidelines you and your loved ones can enjoy the sun safely. If you are having any problems after being in the sun, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider.

Take care in the sun



STAY IN THE SHADE BETWEEN 11AM AND 3PM



COVER UP



WEAR SUNGLASSES WITH 100% UV PROTECTION



WEAR A BROAD-BRIM HAT



USE SUN PROTECTION WITH AT LEAST SPF 15 AND UVA 4 STARS

Instructions:

Sudoku puzzles require you to find the missing numbers in a 9x9 grid, with that grid itself divided into 9 square grids of 3x3.

You can't just add any numbers though. There are rules that make solving the puzzle challenging.

To solve a Sudoku, look for open spaces where its row, column and square already have enough other numbers filled in to tell you the correct value. The more squares you fill in, the easier the puzzle is to finish!

9	8	1	3	6	5	2	7	4
7	6	5	4	8	2	3	1	9
2	4	3	1	7	9	8	5	6
1	9	2	6	3	4	7	8	5
4	3	7	5	2	8	9	6	1
8	5	6	9	1	7	4	3	2
3	2	4	7	5	6	1	9	8
5	1	8	2	9	3	6	4	7
6	7	9	8	4	1	5	2	3

← A number can only occur once in a row, column, or square.

July 2022 Suduko Puzzle

Answer in August's Newsletter

		3			4	5		2
	5			2	3			
1		8			5	3	6	
			2		9	7	4	3
2	7		3				8	
3	4		7	5				
			5	4				6
9		2		3			5	
4					2	9		1

CHECK CASHING SERVICES

Unload Debit Card, Bill Pay, Buy Bitcoin



DEBIT CARD SERVICES

Cash withdrawal fees:
 Post 67 Member: \$1
 Veterans: \$1.50
 Non-Veteran: \$2.50



CHECK CASHING SERVICES

Fees:
 Post 67 Member: 1%
 Veteran: 1.5%
 Non-Veteran: 2%



BILL PAY SERVICES

Fees
 Veteran: FREE
 Non-Veteran: \$3.50
 Same Day Venders:
 Hill County Electric
 Triangle Communications

Other venders allow 1-3 days posting time to your account

CHECK CASHING POLICIES

- ✓ NO MONEY ORDERS
- ✓ WE CASH CANADIAN CHECKS UP TO \$500
- ✓ US GOVERNMENT CHECKS CAN ONLY BE CASHED BY THE INDIVIDUAL TO WHOM THE CHECK IS ISSUED

CHECK CASHING HOURS:

MON-FRI: 8:30am - 4:00pm
 SAT-SUN: CLOSED



"BECAUSE I WANT TO KEEP MY CULTURE AND TRADITIONS ALIVE"

- BREEANNA -

ALWAYS BUCKLE UP AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK OTHERS TO DO THE SAME

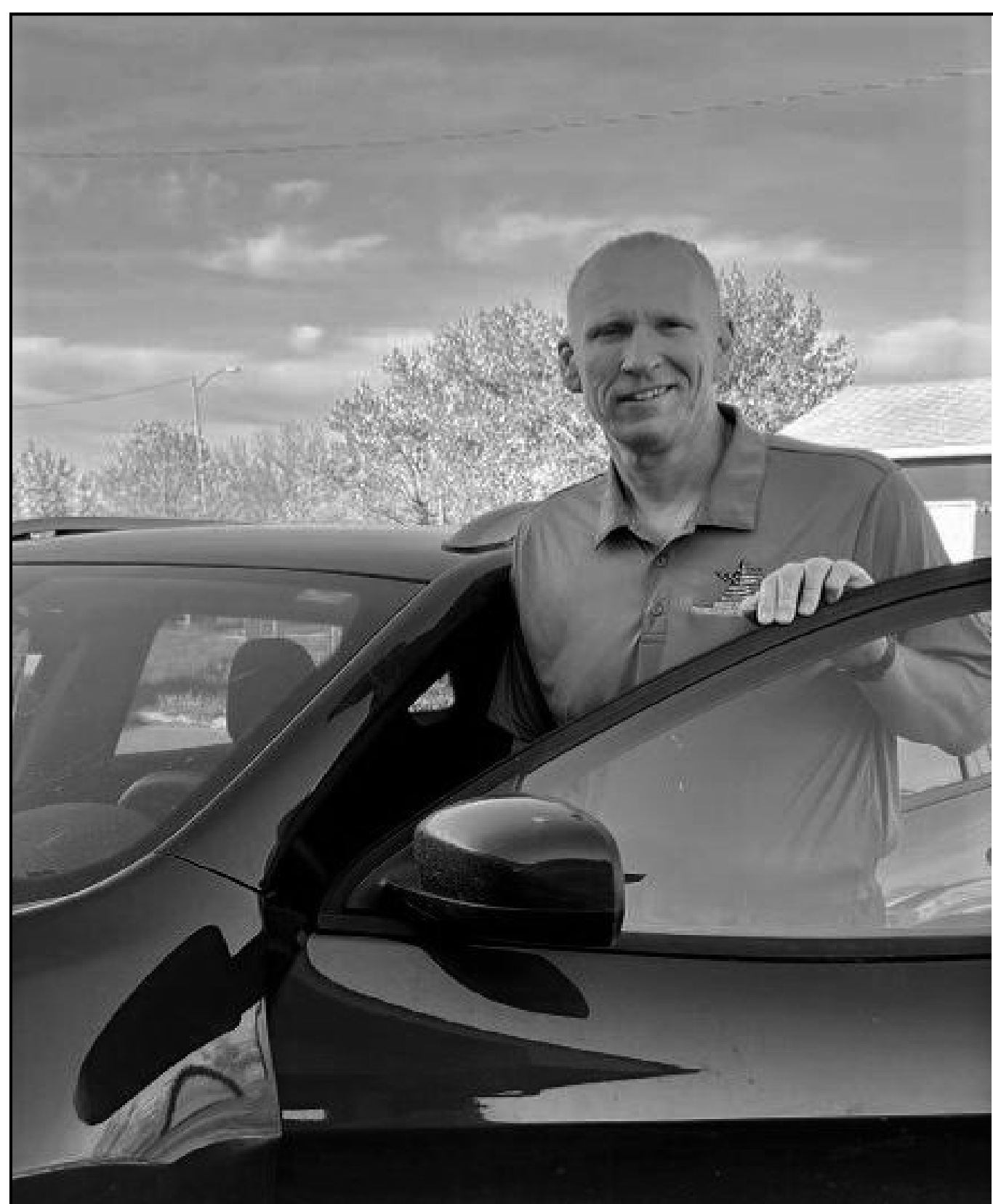
When you don't buckle up, you endanger more than just your own life. Drivers and passengers often don't consider how unbuckled occupants can be thrown at high speed during a crash and can cause serious harm or even death, not only to themselves but to others in the vehicle. That's why it's so important to buckle up and insist others do the same.



[f /SafeOnAllRoads](#)



Employee Spotlight



June's Employee Spotlight is featuring François Nelis. François has recently been promoted to Transportation Supervisor. He has been a Veterans Service driver for the GPVSC since April 2021, in that time he has transported over 60 veterans and covered over 15,000 miles.

He was born and raised in the Netherlands. In 2003,

moved to New Jersey to be with his wife, who he met while stationed in the Dutch Antilles. They lived in New Jersey until December 2020, when they moved to Montana to live on Fort Belknap Reservation, as his wife accepted a position working for the Indian Health Service.

François' country of origin is as flat as can be and without any mountains and 40% of the county is below sea level. Life in Montana couldn't be more opposite!

He is a driver for GPVSC and it has given him the opportunity to travel around the great state of Montana while meeting so many wonderful Veterans and helping with their transport needs. "I thoroughly enjoy the work I do and all the amazing people I work with at GPVSC," said François.

When not at work, he spends free time enjoying the outdoors year-round. He likes to be active and take on new adventures. Enjoying traveling, working out, cooking, and spending time with family. He also has a great passion for history and culture.

François said, "I enjoy learning a lot about the local history and culture from the Veterans during our road trips."

After serving his obligatory 2 years in the Dutch Military, he chose to extend his service and joined the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps (founded in 1665). During the seven years he served, he was fortunate to travel to many places around the world. François commented, "Being a Marine is something I am very proud of."

The motto of the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps is "Qua Patit Orbis" translated from Latin to mean "as far as the world extends". He lives by that motto in his work. His dream is to help GPVSC, in any capacity he is able, to expand all over the Great Plains in order to reach and help as many Veterans as possible.

4TH ANNUAL VETERANS FLOAT TRIP

July 23rd at 8am (8hr float)

Launches in Craig and ends at Mid Cannon
boat Ramp (Dearborn Landing)



COME JOIN THE FUN
RSVP TODAY

VET CENTER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED TO AND FROM THE FLOAT

A picnic lunch will be provided and a
BBQ following the float

LIFE JACKETS ARE PROVIDED

MUST RSVP TO

John Jr or Niles (406) 395-5610

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POTLATCH FUND



Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless (877) 424-3838



July



A representative from the Great Falls Vet Center will be at the office a couple times a month to answer any VA related questions, aid in enrollment, and offer counselling services for eligible Veterans. The representative will also be available to answer questions about benefits and services.

For more information or to schedule and appointment Call Rich or Becky at (406) 452-9048

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
						1	2
3	4 Happy 4th of July! All GPVSC Offices Closed	5	6	7 VET CENTER 10:30am-2:30pm Meet-N-Greet BBQ	8 \$ Future Fortune Weekly Raffle \$ Drawing	9	
10	11 VET CENTER 10:30am-2:30pm	12 American Legion Post 67 Meeting 6pm	13	14 GPVSC VETERANS STAND DOWN - Rocky Boy Fundraiser BBQ	15 \$ Future Fortune Weekly Raffle \$ Drawing	16 4th Annual Veterans Float Trip Rocky Boy	
17	18 VET CENTER 10:30am-2:30pm	19 Meet-N-Greet BBQ	20	21 VET CENTER 10:30am-2:30pm	22 \$ Future Fortune Weekly Raffle \$ Drawing	23	
24	25 National Hire a Veteran Day	26	27 National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day	28 GPVSC VETERANS STAND DOWN - Browning National Buffalo Soldiers Day	29 \$ Future Fortune Weekly Raffle \$ Drawing Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary	30	
31							

WARRIORS CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

ARMY

Royce Bird
Forest Doney
Richard Lujan
Justin Murphy Small
Orion Wolf Chief
Shane Ketchum
Leo Johnson

NAVY

Kristen LaMere
Jessica Stump

AIRFORCE

Trey Henderson
Maia Henderson

NATIONAL GUARD/RESERVE

Chauncey Parker
Charles Parker
Dominic Pullin
Jonas Rockett

LAST SURVIVING WW2 MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT WOODY WILLIAMS DIES AT 98



The last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II has passed on from this life at 98 years old. Marine veteran Hershel "Woody" Williams died Wednesday at 3:15 a.m. at the Huntington, West Virginia, Veterans Affairs hospital named after him, according to a statement from his foundation.

"Woody peacefully joined his beloved wife Ruby while surrounded by his family at the VA Medical Center which bears his name," according to the statement on the foundation's Facebook page. "Woody's family would like to express their sincere gratitude for all the love and support."

Born in 1923 on a dairy farm in Quiet Dell, West Virginia, Williams was the youngest of 11 children, according to the Weirton, West Virginia, Daily Times. Initially disqualified for being too short, Williams enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1943, according to his biography. The demolition sergeant landed on Iwo Jima on Feb. 21, 1945, with 1st Battalion, 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division.

Two days later, on Feb. 23, 1945, he famously destroyed enemy emplacements with a flamethrower, going forward alone into machinegun fire, covered only by four riflemen. His citation states, "he fought desperately for 4 hours under terrific enemy small-arms fire and repeatedly returned to his own lines to prepare demolition charges and obtain serviced flamethrowers," before wiping out one enemy position after another.

He retired after serving 20 years in the Corps and reserves, according to his foundation's website. Following World War II, he worked for the VA for 33 years as a veterans service representative.

He had a special place in his heart for supporting Gold Star Families, an affinity which started at the beginning of World War II. While he was delivering Western Union telegrams containing the news of the loss of a loved one, he developed a deep understanding of the sacrifice of "those lost serving in the military for their country."

With his foundation, Williams established more than 100 Gold Star Families memorial monuments across the United States, with 72 more on the way, according to his foundation's website. In 2020, the war hero got to see a Navy expeditionary mobile base, the USNS Hershel, "Woody" Williams commissioned in his honor.

On one occasion, he "daringly mounted a pillbox to insert the nozzle of his flamethrower through the air vent," which killed all enemy occupants and silenced its gun. Williams received the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman at the White House in October 1945 for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."

He said at the time, "May all those who serve aboard this ship that bears my name be safe and proud. May she have God's blessings for a long life of service to America, the greatest country on Earth."

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-West Virginia, said in a Wednesday statement that Williams was "the embodiment of a true American hero."

"Last Sunday, I was honored to visit with Woody one last time," Manchin said. "We called VA Secretary Denis McDonough so he could thank Woody directly for his unparalleled service to our nation. In true Woody fashion, he wanted to discuss the importance of completing the Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery in Dunbar -his most recent Veterans project - to ensure that the families of our fallen soldiers and Veterans have a safe place to lay their loved ones to rest, protected from the weather throughout the year."

Details about memorial services and a funeral are not yet available, according to a statement on his foundation's Facebook page. City flags in Huntington, West Virginia, will be flown at half mast to honor the Marine veteran.

Correspondence and condolences may be sent to the Woody Williams Foundation at 12123 Shelbyville Road, Suite 100, Louisville, Kentucky, 40243. "Woody's wish is that people continue to carry on his mission," the foundation's statement said.

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