



# THE HOOSIER VETERAN

ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2021

[in.gov/dva](http://in.gov/dva)



## WELCOME!

BY JOE DEVITO

Welcome to the new, redesigned Hoosier Veteran Newsletter! We hope this format is easier to read and navigate. It includes important articles about Veterans benefits and resources offered from the state of Indiana and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. As we enter a new year, our team at the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to making Indiana the best place for Veterans to Live, Work and Thrive! We welcome contributions and feedback to [outreach@dva.in.gov](mailto:outreach@dva.in.gov).

THE HOOSIER VETERAN  
NEWSLETTER

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# SENATE PASSES YEAR-END BILL IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN VETERANS

BY LAURA MCKEE

The Senate unanimously passes the *Deborah Sampson Act* in December as part of a year-end veterans package that aims to secure better national programs for veterans.

The Act includes provisions to make women veteran healthcare a priority. Group counseling, additional days for maternity care, increased number of gender-specific providers and improving the collection and analysis of data regarding women veterans and outreach are highlights of the bill.

To read more, visit [congress.gov/](https://congress.gov/).



Deborah Sampson Gannett, 1760-1827. (Getty Images)

## THE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

BY DENNIS A. WIMER

There is little doubt that 2020 was a challenging year. Indiana, along with our nation, has endured some of its toughest moments in recent memory with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. The challenges of 2020 have once again proved that Indiana's veterans are an unstoppable force for good. We saw so much incredible strength, courage and resiliency across our state.

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**"IN 2021, I THINK ITS FAIR TO SAY WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO AN EVEN BRIGHTER YEAR."**

# ROLL CALL!

## INDIANA VETERANS HOME

It is with sincere gratitude we thank the following organizations for their Christmas donations to our residents:

- Everyone at Caterpillar;
- Cook Research;
- Denise Shoaf-Orndorff;
- Mintonye Elementary School;
- Harrison High School;
- American Legion, Legion Riders, Am Legion Aux., and the Sons of the AmLeg;
- VFW and Aux;
- DAV;
- AmVets;
- Comcast;



Christmas gazebo decorating at IVH.

## INDIANA VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERY

The IVMC celebrated Wreaths Across America December 18. Cemetery staff and IDVA executive team members worked together to lay the wreaths and make them available for viewing.

The Cemetery is open for visitors. Please follow all COVID-19 guidelines:

- Wear a mask in all buildings.
- Maintain 6 feet social space.

We understand and appreciate your contribution to keeping everyone safe to enjoy their visit.



And to all of our community supporters and individuals who helped make Christmas special for our residents, THANK YOU!

# VETERAN PARTNERSHIPS

## Mary T. Klinker Veterans Resource Center

The Mary T. Klinker Veterans Resource Center located in Lafayette, Ind., is dedicated to helping veterans from all walks of life meet the challenges they face with courage and optimism.

The organization can assist with vehicle repairs, home repairs, bills and homelessness. MTK also assists veterans with mental health counseling, treatment and follow-up care.

Any veteran in need can contact MTK for assistance.

[mtkvets.org](http://mtkvets.org)

or on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/marytklinkerveteransresourcecenter>



The Mary T. Klinker Resource Center located in Lafayette, Ind.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

FREDRICK HUDSON

Fred joins the IDVA team from the State Approving Agency as a program director. He is a retired U.S. Army veteran, with more than 20 years of military service. Fred graduated from Indiana Wesleyan University with a Master's degree in Business Administration, with a focus on Health Care. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Business Administration.

**"I REALLY ENJOY HELPING AND WORKING FOR VETERANS," HE SAID. "THAT IS A BIG PART OF WHY I AM HERE NOW."**

Fred loves working on classic cars and enjoys volunteering his time at Grace Church's Care Center.



# VETERAN EVENTS



**What:** Military Veterans Legislative Day

**When:** Jan. 25

**Where:** Broadcast live at:

**[veteranlegislativeday.org](http://veteranlegislativeday.org)**

*\* Check with your veteran service organization to find a local watch party.*

**↑ 2 Events! ↓**

**What:** Veteran Town Hall

**When:** 7 p.m., Jan. 19

**Where:** Old National Centre

510 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis, IN 46204

*\* Check with your veteran service org to find a local watch party.*

**Why:** Discuss legislative priorities for Indiana Veterans.

## VA Now Has One Centralized Phone Number for all Customer Service

The new number is 800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411), and provides a single access point to all VA contact centers. Make sure to add the number to your contacts for easy access. The number is available anytime 24/7/365.

For more information, visit [VA.gov/](https://www.va.gov/)



## THE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE (continued from page 2)

From selfless veteran volunteers to hard-working staff to veteran partner organizations, it has been an inspiration to witness so many extraordinary acts of kindness, big and small.

In early 2020, staff at the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs began working remotely, coordinating efforts virtually. During this time, the team established and executed a second Military Family Relief Fund designed to assist veterans impacted by the pandemic. More than 180 veterans and their families received this assistance and more are awaiting approval.

In July, IDVA took up residence in the newly renovated former home of the American Legion at 777 N. Meridian Street, establishing the Indiana Veterans Center (IVC). Along with IDVA, the Federal VA and many other veteran-serving organizations have made the IVC the nucleus of veteran services and activity in the state of Indiana.

The Indiana Veterans Home (IVH) took immediate steps to protect residents and staff, implementing procedures and following guidelines, while maintaining top quality care and attention. Residents enjoyed virtual family time, holiday celebrations and auto parades. Joy Grow, serving as our interim superintendent, was selected from a competitive field as the permanent superintendent in November.

The Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery (IVMC) remained open with caution for visitors to loved ones' gravesides. While the pandemic slowed the start of the much-anticipated raise and realignment project, the contractor has begun and is two-thirds complete. This project levels out and precisely aligns headstones. On December 19, the cemetery glowed with wreaths as part of the nationwide Wreaths Across America event. IVMC staff and IDVA executive team members placed the wreaths throughout the cemetery the day before to ensure visitors and families could visit on Saturday and experience the beauty of the wreaths safely.

In January, the annual Veterans Legislative Day will be fully virtual. This event brings veterans and Indiana legislators together and allows veterans to discuss concerns, needs and issues with lawmakers and see new legislation presented and implemented to the benefit of veterans and their families throughout the state. IDVA is proud to have taken a more extensive role on the planning committee and we look forward to playing a key role in growing this event in the future.

In 2021, I think it is fair to say we are looking forward to an even brighter year. We aim to serve more veterans with the services that make Indiana a great place for veterans to live, work and thrive. As we close out this year, I wanted to take a moment to say thank you. Thank you for being part of making sure we can take care of every veteran and for working hard toward that end. Thank you for your passionate optimism and hope for the future of veterans and veteran services in Indiana. We wish you and yours a safe, healthy and happy holiday season with all the best for the new year and beyond.

*Dennis A. Wimer*