

THE VETERAN'S BULLETIN

*The Official Newsletter of the Union County
Office of Veterans Services*

The Veteran's Bulletin is the official newsletter of the Union County Office of Veterans Services. Our goal is to keep our Veterans and their families informed about current programs, services and events affecting Union County Veterans and active military residents.



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Union County Hosting First Swing Golf Clinic for Disabled Veterans

The First Swing Golf Clinic for disabled Union County Veterans and residents is coming back to Kenilworth on Saturday, September 10th at the Galloping Hill Golf Learning Center. The clinic is being held from 8:30am to 12:30pm. The address is Galloping Hill Golf Training Center, 3 Golf Drive, Kenilworth, NJ 07033. The First Swing Golf Clinic is designed to teach Veterans and residents with physical disabilities how to improve their functional skills by introducing them to the game of golf. This event is being coordinated by the Union County Office for Persons With Disabilities and Special Needs, with instruction provided by Louis Namm, golf instructor for the Eastern Amputee Golf Association. Golf clubs will be provided for those participants who do not have golf equipment. A continental breakfast will be served during the clinic. The First Swing Golf Clinic is one of several programs designed to assist Union County Veterans and residents with disabilities and special needs.



W. Geoff Smith Named New Union County Veteran Service Coordinator



Mr. W. Geoff Smith has been appointed the new Veterans Service Coordinator for the Union County Veteran Service Office. A Navy Veteran, Geoff served from 1978 to 1982. He was stationed at the Naval Air Station Pensacola Florida, and the Naval Air Station Moffett Field, California. He spent time on deployments in Adak, Alaska, and Keflavik Iceland. Recently Geoff was the constituent representative for Assemblyman Gerald Green and Assemblywoman Linda Carter. As a resident of Plainfield, Geoff is committed to helping others by reaching out to the Union County veterans community and improving the quality of veteran's lives and providing assistance for their families. He recently became a Certified Veterans Service Officer through the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers and cannot wait to get starting helping his veteran brothers and sisters.

Union County Honoring Veterans at Annual POW/MIA Remembrance Event

The Union County Board of County Commissioners invites all residents and visitors to attend the commemoration of POW/MIA Remembrance Day on the steps of the historic Union County Courthouse at 2 Broad Street in Elizabeth on Friday, September 16. The ceremony will start promptly at 11:00 a.m.

“We are proud to honor those men and women who were prisoners of war, and those who are still listed as missing in action,” said Union County Commissioner Chair Rebecca L. Williams. “The Board of County Commissioners will continue to remember the sacrifices made by those in our armed forces as well as their families.”

The ceremony features Commissioner Alexander Mirabella, Liaison to the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, as the master of ceremonies and an invocation led by Union County Commander, VFW Bobby Jeans. The guest speaker will be United States Air Force Sergeant Ernesto M. Hernandez. The National Anthem and God Bless America will be performed by Ms. Kimberly Pierre.

The presentation of colors will be performed by Honor Guards from the Union County Sheriff Office, Union County Prosecutor’s Office, Elizabeth Police and Fire Honor Guard. The ceremony will include a rifle salute, TAPS performed by Alfredo Beltran and will conclude with the Retirement of the Colors.

PACT ACT Adds New Presumptive Disabilities for Vietnam and Gulf War Veterans

The PACT Act of 2022 was signed into law by President Biden in August, and is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in the history of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act. If you're a Veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits.

The PACT Act will bring these changes:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam War, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- Adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps the VA to improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

More than 20 burn pit and other toxic exposure presumptive conditions have been added as disabilities based on the PACT Act. This change expands benefits for both Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans.

These cancers are now presumptive:

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphatic cancer of any type
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

These illnesses are now presumptive:

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis



If you are a Union County Veteran or a dependent, and wish to file a disability claim, please contact the Union County Office of Veteran Services at 908-527-4918/4719, Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. We will keep your information confidential and schedule an appointment to file your claim.

The Union County Office of Veteran Services

The Union County Office of Veteran Services is a vital link between men and women who served their country and the services available from federal, state, county and municipal levels of government as well as the private sector. Veteran Services provides advocacy, information and referrals for veterans and their families on a wide variety of financial, health and quality-of-life issues related to VA benefits and services.

Service is available by appointment only at our office in the Union County Administration Complex in Elizabeth. For more information, please contact our county Veteran Service Coordinator, Geoff Smith, at 908-527-4918 or our VSO Ken Glick at 908-527-4719 or go to our website at <https://ucnj.org/veteran>.



Here are some of the many services offered by the Office of Veterans Services for FREE to Union County Veterans and their family members!

- Provides eligibility criteria for all veteran benefits and entitlements
- Assists in securing copies of lost military documents, such as the DD-214 (military separation document)
- Guides applications to the VA for service-connected compensation and pension claims
- Helps veteran’s widow/widower and children apply for benefits
- Helps with appeals for denied benefit applications
- Provides death and burial benefit information
- Coordinates annual placement of flags on veteran graves in Union County on Memorial Day weekend
- Provides contact & referral information for housing, mental health, education, job training/placement, financial and medical/nursing home services
- Facilitates transportation to VA Healthcare System at Lyons and East Orange through the Union County Paratransit system

Union County Office of Veteran Services Directory

For questions or information regarding veterans benefits and services, please contact our Veteran Services staff:

- **W. Geoff Smith – Veteran Service Coordinator**
Phone: 908-527-4918 Email: W.Geoff.Smith@ucnj.org
- **Kenneth Glick – Accredited Veteran Service Officer**
Phone: 908-527-4719 Email: Kenneth.Glick@ucnj.org



OFFICE OF VETERAN SERVICES:
UNION COUNTY ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING
10 ELIZABETHTOWN PLAZA
ELIZABETH NJ 07203

HOURS OF OPERATION:
MONDAY—FRIDAY 8:30AM—4:30PM
TELEPHONE: 908-527-4918/4719
WEBSITE:
WWW.UCNI.ORG/VETERANS

A Service of the Union County Board of County Commissioners



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