

Veteran Assistance Organizations

Brunswick County Veterans Coalition

The purpose of the Coalition is to unify the various military organizations within Brunswick County, NC and provide critical information to the veterans and their families who reside within the county boundaries. Further, to coordinate efforts/resources among these veteran organizations to assist veterans in need.

Point of Contact: Gary G. Crowden (910) 854-0179
garycrowden@aol.com

Brunswick County Veteran Services

Brunswick County Veterans Services is a county government office, provided to inform and assist Brunswick County Veterans and their eligible family members in applying for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies. Applicants must be residents of Brunswick County to receive assistance and should call the office to schedule an appointment to see a Service Officer.

Point of Contact: Anita Hartsell (910) 253-2233
anita.hartsell@bunswickcountync.gov

Winston-Salem VA Regional Office

VA's Winston-Salem Regional Office (RO) administers a variety of benefits and services, including Compensation, Education, Insurance, Loan Guaranty, Pension, and Veterans Readiness and Employment for Veterans, Servicemembers, their families and survivors in North Carolina.

Point of Contact: Mike M. Bilosz (800) 827-1000

Wilmington VA Medical Center

This facility provides services for several medical conditions such as: audiology, cardiology, dermatology, geriatrics, mental health care, dental, infectious diseases, physical therapy, podiatry, primary care, radiology, urology, and women's health care. It is affiliated with the Fayetteville VA Medical Center and is responsible for staffing and maintaining a satellite clinic in Supply, NC.

Point of Contact: Deborah Caruso (910) 343-5300 Extension 3551
deborah.caruso@va.gov

Veteran Smiles Foundation

The purpose of the Foundation is to provide required dental care to veterans in need in North Carolina. Its aim is to help achieve good physical and mental well-being by improving oral health. The Foundation collaboration network includes the East Carolina University Dental Medicine statewide clinics inclusive of the facility in Supply, NC, NC Serves (Asheville) and the county Veteran Services Offices.

Point of Contact: COL (Ret) David McCracken (984) 233-3350
david@vetsmiles.org

Step Up Wilmington

Serves veterans affected by unemployment and underemployment, often associated with the challenges of incarceration, homelessness, recovery, domestic violence, or anything that keeps one from reaching their goals. The organization teaches people to get and keep quality jobs, rebuild hope & self-esteem, and create opportunities for themselves. It provides a placement service for those in need and provides the support and training necessary to move individuals and families toward stability, impacting their lives and strengthening our communities.

Point of Contact: **Aschanti Gibbs (910) 343-8469**
aschanti@stepupwilmington.org

Operation North State (ONS)

This organization offers forty-eight (48) "unique" veterans support services programs (fishing, golf, cycling, go-karting and attending baseball games) for North Carolina's veterans – especially wounded warriors/DVets. Operation North State also hosts its Annual NCCARES Christmas Box Project for 1250 North Carolina shut-in veterans. ONS annually hosts nine Top Shelf Fishin' Festivals held throughout the state for wounded warriors/DVets.

Point of Contact: **Terry Snyder (366) 764-5967**
snydert33@gmail.com

State of North Carolina Department of Military and Veteran Affairs

This organization supports the uniformed military, both active and reserve, and their families and installations and communities as well as military veterans, their families, facilities and services in North Carolina by providing timely and responsive engagement; to enhance North Carolina's current military and veteran friendly environment and foster and promote business, technology, transportation, education, economic development, and healthcare by facilitating assistance and coordination between the Federal Government, the State, its political subdivisions and collaborative and supporting agencies.

Point of Contact: **LTC (Ret) Walter Gaskin (984) 204-8336**

Lisa Ramos lisa.ramos@milvets.nc.gov (910) 251-5704

Elizabeth Dole Foundation

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation has created a new program, Respite Relief for Military and Veteran Caregivers, which offers family caregivers of veterans or service members access to free, short-term relief with the help of in-home care professional.

Point of Contact: **Mary Hahn Ward (919) 451-4451**
maryhahnward@gmail.com

Canines for Service

Canines for Service provides Veterans from all conflicts with service-connected mobility challenges, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Military Sexual Trauma with highly trained service dogs at no cost or promotional consideration.

Point of Contact: **Lexi Green (910) 362-8181 Ext 2**
information@caninesforservice.org

The Independence Fund

The Independence Fund is committed to empowering our nation's catastrophically wounded, injured, or ill Veterans to overcome physical, mental, and emotional wounds incurred in the line of duty. We are dedicated to improving the lives of both our Veterans and their families. Through our Mobility, Caregiver, Advocacy (inclusive of legal issue), Casework, Operation RESILIENCY, Independence@Home and Family programs, The Independence Fund strives to bridge the gap of unmet needs for Veterans and their Caregivers.

Point of Contact: **John Brago (201) 912-7790**
jbrago@independencefund.org

AARP

The AARP assists veterans in many ways but primarily with financial planning support inclusive of tax preparation and providing counseling on caregiving support as well as act as a liaison to obtaining veteran benefits.

Point of Contact: **Rosalie Calarco (910) 746-7081**
rcalarco@aarp.org

Veteran Affairs Caregiver Program in Wilmington, NC

The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Program (CSP) offers clinical services to caregivers of eligible and covered Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. The program's mission is to promote the health and well-being of family caregivers who care for our Nation's Veterans, through education, resources, support, and services. CSP carries out its mission through two programs:

- Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)
- Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)

Point of Contact: **Heike Steinle (910) 343-5300 Extension 3848**
Heike.Steinle@VA.gov

Habitat for Humanity for Brunswick County

Habitat works toward our vision by building strength, stability, and self-reliance in partnership with families in need of decent and affordable housing. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage.

Point of Contact: **Holly Williams (910) 454-0007**
holly@bchabitat.org

Veterans Memorial Reef

Veterans Memorial Reef is a non-profit veteran organization that honors fallen heroes with placement in a unique aquatic memorial. The memorial service enables veterans to be placed at sea with their remains transferred to an aquatic urn which is then sealed in a concrete memorial marker. The memorial marker is then lowered to the seafloor to become an artificial reef. The reef is located off the coast of Carolina and Wrightsville Beach, NC. Through this commemoration, we can honor their passing while sustaining marine life and helping ensure the integrity of our coastline.

Point of Contact: **Maj (Ret) Thomas Marcinowski (910) 547-9277**
vmmarcinowski@gmail.com

Lower Cape Fear Life Care

Lower Cape Fear LifeCare works with the Department of Veterans Affairs as a member of the We Honor Veterans program. This program is a collaborative effort of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the Department of Veteran's Affairs. The organization completes a military history checklist to determine what hospice services are needed in order to provide the greatest benefits.

Point of Contact: **Anne Hewett (910) 796-7900**
Anne.Hewett@LifeCare.org

Legal Aid of North Carolina

This organization provides free legal help to low-income North Carolinian veterans in civil cases involving basic human needs like safety, shelter, income and more. Specifically, they can help you retain ownership of your home, car or other form of vital transportation, and other essential property by fighting foreclosures and repossessions, and handling bankruptcy. Additionally, they can protect you from illegal debt collections and abusive or deceptive trade practices. They also can help the veteran create advanced directives -- wills, living wills, powers of attorney and health care powers of attorney -- to distribute your property after death and determine who can make financial and medical decisions on your behalf.

Point of Contact: **Michelle Hudson (910) 763-6207**
michelleh@legallaidnc.org

Veterans Services of the Carolinas

There are several programs affiliated with this organization. Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) is a rapid rehousing and homeless prevention program designed to help Veterans and their families maintain their current housing or helping find them new and affordable housing. Healing Outreach Partnerships for Empowerment (HOPE) is a program designed to provide intensive outreach to individuals with severe mental illness who are living outside and are deemed most vulnerable. The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) serves homeless Veterans who need assistance in order to enter, re-enter, remain, or advance in the workforce. VSC is the local coordination center for NCServes-Western and NCServes Coastal, North Carolina's first coordinated network of public, private and non-profit organizations working together to serve Veterans, service members and their families.

Point of Contact: **Jalyssa Nava (855) 962-8387**
Jalyssa.nava@abccm.org

Honor Flight in Wilmington

The Honor Flight Network is a national network comprised of independent Hubs working together in furtherance of the Honor Flight mission. In furtherance of this common goal, Honor Flight shows our nation's veterans the appreciation and honor they deserve. Participation in an Honor Flight trip gives veterans the opportunity to share this momentous occasion with other comrades, to remember friends and comrades lost, and

share their stories and experiences with other veterans. All honored veterans travel at no cost to the veteran. The Honor Flight Network is currently serving veterans from the WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War eras. It also serves terminally ill veterans serving during any era.

Point of Contact: COL(Ret) Chrissy Sanford (910) 200-2346
chrissysanford@gmail.com

Anchor Initiative

This program is a Brunswick County Sheriff's Office initiative to assist those veterans who are suffering from addiction and are ready for treatment. It removes obstacles that typically prevent them from seeking help and/or have an inability to find a treatment facility. It assists in transportation to treatment and the cost of that treatment if the veteran is unable to pay for it.

Point of Contact: Deputy Jonathan Oliver (910) 363-7880
jonoliverbcso@gmail.com

National Association of Veterans and Families

The NAVF provides support and advocacy services for wartime veterans, spouses and families from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War and thru the current conflicts. They serve to educate the veteran community as to eligibility for benefits, advocate cases that have been denied, direct veterans for other services such as homeless veteran opportunities, job assistance and other services as deemed necessary, shepherd the application process to completion for all veterans, spouses and families, and to follow through and obtain status.

Point of Contact: Brenda Applebee (904) 394-3903
Bapplebee@vetsmatter.org

Operation At Ease

Its mission is to provide active duty military personnel and their immediate families with a complimentary weekend of rest, relaxation and recreation as an expression of our community's appreciation and gratitude for their service.

Point of Contact: Bob Ames (910) 553-4274
Rames1@atmc.net

Patriot Guard Riders

The Patriot Guard Riders (PGR) is an organization based in the United States whose members attend the funerals of members of the U.S. military and first responders at the invitation of a decedent's family. The group forms a voluntary honor guard at military burials, helps protect mourners from harassment and fills out the ranks at burials of indigent and homeless veterans. In addition to attending funerals, the group also greets troops returning from overseas at homecoming celebrations and performs volunteer work for veteran's organizations such as Veterans Homes.

Point of Contact: Bill Powell (972) 741-2896
Txpowell50@gmail.com