

**MINUTES  
of the  
THIRD MEETING  
of the  
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**August 10, 2022  
Daniels Leadership Center, Room 200  
New Mexico Military Institute  
298 W 19th Street #238  
Roswell**

The third meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by Representative Harry Garcia, co-chair, on August 10, 2022 at 9:09 a.m. in Room 200 of the Daniels Leadership Center at the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) in Roswell.

**Present**

Rep. Harry Garcia, Co-Chair  
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon  
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto  
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana  
Rep. Luis M. Terrazas

**Absent**

Sen. Harold Pope, Co-Chair  
Sen. Craig W. Brandt  
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna

**Advisory Members**

Rep. Rachel A. Black  
Rep. Randal S. Crowder  
Rep. Stefani Lord  
Rep. Randall T. Pettigrew  
Rep. Jane E. Powdrell-Culbert

Sen. William F. Burt  
Rep. Meredith A. Dixon  
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson  
Sen. Michael Padilla  
Rep. G. Andrés Romero

**Staff**

Jeret Fleetwood, Project Coordinator, Legislative Council Service (LCS)  
Nancy Martinez, Research Assistant, LCS

**Guests**

The guest list is in the meeting file.

**Handouts**

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

**References to Webcast**

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at [www.nmlegis.gov](http://www.nmlegis.gov), under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for the agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

## **Wednesday, August 10**

### **Welcome and Introductions (9:09 a.m.)**

Representative Garcia welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members of the committee and staff introduced themselves.

### **New Mexico Veterans Affairs Health Care System (9:13 a.m.)**

Larry Campos, congressional liaison, New Mexico Veterans Affairs Health Care System, gave a presentation about the impact that the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon, Cerro Pelado and Black Fire wildfires had on the community-based outpatient clinics. He also gave an update on the construction projects of the facility. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20081022%20Item%201%20VA.pdf>

### **Healing America's Heroes (9:41 a.m.)**

Eddie Crain, founder, Healing America's Heroes, introduced former Representative Bob Wooley, District 66. Mr. Crain said that there has been an initial conversation about leasing the Fort Stanton prison facility and converting it to a veterans outreach center. He talked about the different therapeutic activities that the program offers to veterans. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20081022%20Item%202%20Healing%20Americas%20Heroes.pdf>

### **Veterans and Military Family Caucus (10:56 a.m.)**

Claudia Risner, chair, Veterans and Military Families Caucus, said that the caucus has been established for nine years. The primary mission of the caucus is advocacy for military families and active duty service members. She said that the caucus also advocates for members to run for office. One important issue that is ongoing is a landscape assessment done by the AmericaServes program in partnership with Syracuse University. The assessment was funded by money from the 2022 legislative session, and a report is to be completed to present its findings. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20081022%20Item%203%20VMFC.pdf>

### **NMMI (12:02 p.m.)**

Colonel David W. West, chief of staff, NMMI, welcomed committee members to the NMMI. Colonel West said that the NMMI will be coming to the legislature to extend the General Richard T. Knowles Legislative Scholarship Program from four years to six years. He said that there will be 200 students on the scholarship.

### **Veterans Benefits Administration (12:26 p.m.)**

Corliss De La Garza, veteran readiness and employment officer, Albuquerque Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, United States Department of Veterans Affairs, said that

the administration is an employment program but does provide an educational program, and there are requirements that must be met in order to be a part of the program. Currently, there are 400 veterans who are enrolled in four-year institutions. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20081022%20Item%204%20Job%20Opportunities%20with%20ABQ%20VA%20Regional%20office.pdf>

**Southwest New Mexico Veteran's Transportation Network (1:38 p.m.)**

Magil Duran, Sr., president, Southeast New Mexico Veteran's Transportation Network, said that the network started in 2008. Mr. Duran said that the network is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that does not receive and will not accept any money from the federal government. Instead, the network makes money to cover the cost of travel expenses, vehicle maintenance and other needs through fundraisers, private donations and grants from foundations.

**New Mexico National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academy (2:28 p.m.)**

Tina Cisneros, program director, New Mexico National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academy, introduced Maribel Bugarim, parent, and Raymond Peña, deputy commandant, New Mexico National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academy. Ms. Cisneros said that the academy program provides education leadership, character development and life coping skills to New Mexico high school dropouts so that they become productive citizens. Mr. Peña said that the program has been beneficial to him and that he has gained attributable life skills. Ms. Bugarim has a child enrolled in the program and has found the program rewarding to her and her daughter. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20081022%20Item%206%20NMNG%20Youth%20ChalleNGE%20Academy.pdf>

**Cannon Air Force Base (CAFB) Update (3:20 p.m.)**

Colonel Terence Taylor, commander, 27th Special Operations Wing, CAFB, introduced Richard Masters, Jr., director of staff, 27th Special Operations Wing, CAFB; David Robinson, member, Military Affairs Committee, CAFB; Colonel Brent Greer, vice commander, 27th Special Operations Wing, CAFB; Chief Master Sergeant Kristina B. Montgomery, command chief, 27th Special Operations Wing, CAFB; Captain Jacob McDonald, CAFB; and Chris Perkins, base civil engineer, CAFB. Colonel Taylor discussed the priorities at CAFB, gave an installation overview and described the base's mission capabilities. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20081022%20Item%207%20CAFB%20Update.pdf>

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.