



# Chattanooga Area Veterans Council

Serving veterans and their organizations of East Tennessee, North Georgia and North Alabama

## CAVC Awards Banquet

Chattanooga Area Veterans Council will hold its annual Awards Banquet Friday, 17 February 2017, 6:00 pm, at the Roosevelt Room of the Choo Choo Hotel, downtown Chattanooga TN. Judge Don Poole, prior USAF JAG Officer, will be the guest speaker.

All veterans are invited to attend and enjoy this night of camaraderie, fellowship and recognition of those who will be identified for their work in support of the Chattanooga veterans community in 2016.

The reservation form is the last page of this newsletter. Your reservation must be received by 13 February.

## *Special Thanks to our CAVC member Organizations*

Chattanooga Area Veterans Council Executive Board would like to thank the following member organizations who have paid their 2016 dues:

American Legion Post 159, Hixson  
Get Veterans Involved, Inc.

Military Officers Association of America, Chattanooga  
Tri-State Women Veterans, MWAN Unit 157

USS Carbonero Base Submarine Veterans  
VFW Post 4848, Chattanooga

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 95, East Ridge  
Southeast Tennessee Veterans Coalition

Member's dues help to cover the cost of corporate filings, meeting meals, plaques, PO Box, stationery, and other expenses.

## DoD Extends Online Military Exchange Shopping Privileges to Veterans

The Department of Defense announced a policy change that will extend limited online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans of the military. The veterans online shopping benefit will be effective this Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2017.

While shopping privileges exclude the purchase of uniforms, alcohol and tobacco products, it includes the Exchange Services' dynamic online retail environment known so well to service members and their families.

"We are excited to provide these benefits to honorably discharged veterans to recognize their service and welcome them home to their military family," said Peter Levine, performing the duties for the Under-Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. "In addition, this initiative represents a low-risk, low-cost opportunity to help fund Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs in support of service members' and their families' quality of life. And it's just the right thing to do".

The online benefit will also strengthen the exchanges' online businesses to better serve current patrons. Inclusion of honorably discharged veterans would conservatively double the exchanges' online presence, thereby improving the experience for all patrons through improved vendor terms, more competitive merchandise assortments, and improved efficiencies, according to DoD officials.

"As a nation, we are grateful for the contributions of our service members. Offering this lifetime online benefit is one small, tangible way the nation can say, 'Thank you' to those who served with honor," Levine said.

**Guard & Reserve On-Site Sale**  
*We're bringing the benefit to you!*  
[www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com)

**February 16-18, 2017**  
 Thursday & Friday: 0900 to 1700  
 Saturday: 0900 to 1600

Hosted by Robins AFB Commissary  
 Susan Edmonds, Director  
 susan.edmonds2@dcca.mil  
 (478) 322-7618 or (478) 926-3714  
 Cell#904-712-7513



**Future Events:**

March	16-18, 2017
April	20-22, 2017
May	18-20, 2017
June	15-17, 2017
July	20-22, 2017

**Stock your pantry and save!**

- Military ID card authorizing commissary privileges is required
- Cash, check, EBT, debit and credit cards accepted
- All authorized shoppers are welcome



**TRICARE Health Tips**

**Prescription Refills** -- Did you know you THAT beneficiaries don't have copays for prescription drugs at military pharmacies? Military pharmacies can fill prescriptions written by military or a civilian provider for up to a 90-day supply of most drugs. Military pharmacies stock most drugs on the basic core formulary and many brand name maintenance drugs on the uniform formulary. Be sure to check with the pharmacy first to make sure they carry your drug. You just need to bring your prescription to a military pharmacy to have it filled. Or your civilian provider can send the prescription electronically, saving time and cutting down on potential errors from using paper prescriptions. You can find the military pharmacy closest to you at [www.TRICARE.mil/MTF](http://www.TRICARE.mil/MTF).

**Energy Drinks** -- Caffeinated drinks promising an energy boost when you're feeling sleepy may seem like a great idea, but too much can be harmful. Consuming high amounts of caffeine can lead to increased blood pressure, panic attacks, heart palpitations, anxiety, dehydration and insomnia. You shouldn't consume more than 200 milligrams of caffeine every four hours.

**High Blood Pressure** -- According to the American Heart Association, some common high blood pressure complications are: heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, vision loss and heart failure. The best way to know if you have high blood pressure is to get your numbers checked. A blood pressure check is quick and easy and it can be done in your health care provider's office or clinic. TRICARE covers blood pressure screening as part of its clinical preventive benefit. For more information, including tips on a heart healthy lifestyle visit [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org).

**E-cigarettes** -- Electronic cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth in the United States. In The U.S. Surgeon General recently released the first report by a Federal agency to review the public health issue of them. E-cigarettes are tobacco products that deliver nicotine and other chemicals to the user. Although e-cigarette aerosol generally contains fewer toxins than traditional tobacco products, it's not harmless. It can contain nicotine and other harmful chemicals.

**Hydration** -- You can get dehydrated in cold weather. And it isn't always easy to hydrate, especially when it's cold outside. If you're active outside for less than two hours, it isn't likely to be a problem. But if you're out in the cold for hours, the combination of heavy clothing and high-intensity exercise can lead to sweating, which contributes to dehydration. Cold weather also tends to move body fluids from your extremities to your core, increasing your urine output and adding to dehydration. So when you're in a cold climate, don't rely on thirst to tell you when you need to drink. Drink often and before you're thirsty. Water and sports drinks are the best fluids to maintain hydration. Carbonated and caffeinated beverages, including energy drinks, have a dehydrating effect. Enjoy exercising in the cold weather, but be sure to keep your water bottle in tow. Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for winter weather tips and resources.

Chattanooga Area Veterans Council  
 PO Box 24984, Chattanooga, TN 37422  
 Check out our website: [www.chattareaveterans.com](http://www.chattareaveterans.com)

Alan Syler, Chairman	423-855-6876
Chris Dooley, Chairman-Elect	702-701-2858
Bob Woods, Vice-Chairman	423-413-9106
Mickey McCamish, Immed. Past Chair.	423-394-0024
Mark Parks, Treasurer	423-326-0839
Carol Laing, Secretary	423-309-1457

CAVC is a 501(c)(19) non-profit veteran organization.

## VA Update

⊕ The VA budget totals \$176.9 billion for fiscal 2017, almost twice the budget total when Obama took office in fiscal 2009 (\$93.7 billion) and almost four times the total when the war in Afghanistan began in fiscal 2001 (\$48.7 billion). Of the 2017 total, roughly \$77.4 billion is set aside for discretionary programs, and the rest for disability, medical and education benefits, along with other mandatory spending.

⊕ VA employed about 365,000 workers in fiscal 2016, up about 88,000 people from when President Barack Obama took office in 2009. Employee bonuses and discipline has been a constant fight for department leaders in recent years, with critics saying they do too little to root out lazy or incompetent bureaucrats.

⊕ Roughly 9 million veterans were enrolled in VA health care at the end of fiscal 2016, about 42 percent of the nation's veterans population. That number was 7.8 million in fiscal 2009, roughly 33 percent of the total U.S. veterans population at the time. Part of the increase is due to troops returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

⊕ About 58 million medical appointments were scheduled by VA in fiscal 2016, an increase of almost six percent in two years. Almost a third of those appointments were scheduled with doctors working outside the VA system, in private clinics.

⊕ More than 542,000 veterans were rated as 100 percent disabled at the end of fiscal 2016, giving them access to a wide range of payouts and benefits. In fiscal 2009, that number was 265,000.

⊕ About 93 percent of veterans medical appointments are being scheduled within 30 days, according to department data from December 2016. That's down about 1 percent from fall 2014. The average wait time for mental health care appointments is 4.5 days, roughly the same as the wait over the previous two years. The wait for primary care is 5.7 days (down from 6.7 in fall 2014) and the wait for specialty care is 10.2 days (up from 7.5 days in fall 2014).

⊕ And 8,481 patients on VA lists have been waiting more than four months for appointment requests, a number that swelled to more than 10,000 in early 2016.

⊕ More than 960,000 veterans received some type of education benefits through VA in fiscal 2016, up from around 265,000 in fiscal 2009. The biggest contributor to that jump was passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2010, which offered a full four years tuition at state universities and a housing stipend to troops who served at least three years after 2001.

⊕ An average of 20 veterans a day committed suicide in fiscal 2014, the latest information available. Past research had pegged that number at 22, but those estimates were drawn from fewer states and contained problematic guesses.

⊕ About 96,000 first-time benefits claims were "backlogged" as of Dec. 31, 2016. A claim is considered overdue if it isn't completed within 125 days. The backlog peaked at about 611,000 cases in March 2013 and was down as low as 70,000 cases in fall 2015, when VA officials announced that zeroing out the backlog completely was likely impossible and could unnecessarily rush some cases.

⊕ Another 303,673 benefit cases that are pending in the department's appeals system, as of Dec. 31, 2016. That's up from about 181,000 cases at the end of 2009. The cases typically take three or more years to fully complete.

⊕ More than 2.6 million VA home loans were awarded in fiscal 2016, up about 500,000 eight years earlier.

⊕ Federal researchers estimate that 39,472 veterans were homeless as of January 2016. That's down from about 75,600 veterans on the streets in 2009. So far, 33 communities and three states have been certified as "effectively" ending veteran homelessness, meaning they have the resources to rapidly house all veterans in their community facing financial distress.

[Source: MilitaryTimes | Leo Shane III | January 16, 2017 | ++]

## Vietnam Vets - Duane Hackney | Recipient of 70+ Awards

Duane Hackney was a native of Flint Michigan who joined the Air Force in 1965 to become a Pararescueman. As the Vietnam War was picking up steam, the United States began to use air superiority in an ever-increasing fashion to hold back a relentless enemy. And while the United States enjoyed technological superiority in the air, North Vietnamese ground fire and surface to air missiles were regularly enough to take its toll on the American planes. When one of these pilots would go down over the jungles of Vietnam, this typically meant death or capture that led to a less than courteous stay at the infamous Hanoi Hilton.



But America had made a promise to his pilots, that whenever possible and in cases when it seemed completely improbable that they would come looking for them thanks to men like Duane Hackney. This man would fly over 200 combat missions over 3 ½ years of volunteer duty in Vietnam. Just days after reporting for his first assignment, he took a .30 caliber slug to the leg and had it removed himself to avoid medical evacuation. In the months ahead, he would see the helicopter on which he served shot down up to five times as they braved the most hostile of enemy territory in search for downed pilots.

By his own account, he couldn't recall the number of times he descended into the thick canopy of the Vietnamese jungle to search for downed pilots or exactly how many he was able to extract. But as the missions accumulated and the enemy fire came raining down, it became clear that each mission brought with it a necessity to display unprecedented valor and an opportunity for near certain death. After a year plus of demonstrating such valor, one particular mission in February 1967 would set him apart and earn him the Air Force's second-highest military honor. On February 3, 1967, Hackney was riding in one of two HH-3E jolly green giant long-range search and rescue helicopters over Vietnam. On his second rescue mission of the day near Mu Gia Pass North Vietnam, Hackney descended into the jungle as he had many times to search for the downed pilot.

Despite the presence of heavy enemy forces, he was able to locate the pilot and assist him in being hoisted up into the helicopter. Once the crew departed, they became subject to heavy 37 mm flak that tore into the craft creating an intense fire on board. During the chaos, Hackney was able to take off his own parachute and place it upon the downed airmen with little regard for his own life. Just as Hackney made his way to the smoke-filled cabin and slipped another parachute around his own arms, a second burst of 37 mm flak tore into the craft sending it into an uncontrollable spin. Unsecured Hackney was flung from the helicopter out the open door. Despite being dazed and confused, he was able to employ the parachute that was still unbuckled and made a successful landing over enemy territory. The rest on board this particular HH-3E, died in the crash, and Duane Hackney found himself on the opposite side of a rescue that he himself had conducted time and time again.

Eventually, another jolly green giant was able to locate Hackney and bring him to safety. It was for his actions on this particular mission that Duane Hackney was awarded the Air Force Cross. One might think such a close call would be plenty of cause to call it quits as surely one could only cheat death so many times, but Duane Hackney took his calling seriously and was earning distinguished flying crosses as late as 1970. Before his career was over, Hackney would receive more than 70 individual awards making him the most decorated enlisted man in Air Force history. After 26 years of unprecedented service where he served at great risk to his own life in order to save others, Chief Master Sgt. Duane Hackney retired from the Air Force in 1991.

Tragically the man, the entire North Vietnamese Army couldn't seem to kill, died of a heart attack in 1993 at age 46. And while Hackney would claim he was just doing his job, his record of unprecedented gallantry is without rival in the Air Force. In 2006, a training facility at Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio was named in his honor. In 2009, he was inducted into the Michigan aviation Hall of Fame. While his life was cut short, the untold ripple effect of the pilots he pulled from the hostile jungles of Vietnam is immeasurable. Men lived because Duane Hackney saw to it that it was so. He honored the commitment of a nation to its pilots enabling them to enter harm's way with the confidence that men like Duane Hackney would be coming for them. Although the United States Air Force is only 68 years old, it appears this man will hold the title of most decorated for quite some time. [Source: War History On Line | Jeff Edwards | December 13, 2016 ++]

## Purple Heart Additional Protection Bill

The Purple Heart is more than just a medal -- especially to the recipients who have sacrificed while fighting for their country. "It gives me a distinguished feeling," said Sam Houston, who was awarded a Purple Heart in 1970 after his service in the Vietnam War. "No matter where I go, if I'm wearing a Purple Heart hat, people always stop me. There's that saying, 'all gave some and some gave all.' " This year, a piece of legislation is expected to come up in Congress that could help protect the Purple Heart and preserve that distinguished feeling.

Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA) plans to introduce the **Private Corrado Piccoli Purple Heart Preservation Act** this session. The bill would penalize the sale of any Purple Heart awarded to a member of the Armed Forces by imprisonment up to six months or a fine, which would be determined by the Department of Justice based off the federal fine schedule. "The purpose of the bill is to see the Purple Heart protected and to ensure medals find their way back to families or homes of honor," Cook, himself a veteran, said in an emailed statement to the News Herald in Panama City. "It's wrong to turn profits on the sacrifices of our service members. These medals are powerful symbols of selflessness in defense of our nation. They deserve to be cherished by families instead of being traded like a pack of baseball cards and auctioned to the highest bidder



Piccoli's medal was purchased in an antique mall for \$100. The woman who purchased the medal gave it to her son, Capt. Zachariah Fike, who served in the Vermont Army National Guard. Fike then founded Purple Hearts Reunited, a nonprofit that returns lost or stolen military medals of valor to veterans or their family. Cook introduced the bill last year, but it was at the end of the congressional session, and no action was taken. He is optimistic it will pass this time and expects it to get referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations as it was last session. In 2013, President Barack Obama signed the Stolen Valor Act, which makes it a federal crime to fraudulently claim to be a recipient of certain military decorations or medals to obtain tangible benefit.

Houston, who is chapter commander of the Sgt. Timothy Padgett 811 Military Order of the Purple Heart, said that it "happens quite often" that a military medal may end up in a pawn shop or antique store. Those who find one should turn it in to a local chapter of Purple Hearts Reunited, advised Houston. Awarded since 1917 to those wounded or killed while serving in the U.S. military, the Purple Heart is an important badge of honor in military service and should be regarded as such, Houston said. "It's the oldest continually used medal in our history," he added. "It's the only medal given out strictly for combat wounds, that's what makes it prestigious. As a recipient, I'm glad they're trying to get a handle on this. People should not be able to buy any military award for heroism or wounds. It takes away from what it truly means." [Source: Northwest Florida Daily News (Fort Walton Beach) | Jennie Mckeen | January 17, 2017 ++]





# 26th Annual CAVC Awards Banquet

Friday, 17 February 2017, 6:00 pm, Chattanooga Choo Choo Hotel Roosevelt Room

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Reservation: complete this form and mail it with your check to the address below.  
Make your check payable to CHATTANOOGA AREA VETERANS COUNCIL

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Reserve \_\_\_\_\_ dinners at \$24.00 each equals \$\_\_\_\_\_ (total enclosed)

OR

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Reserve \_\_\_\_\_ table(s) at \$180.00 for 8 seats equals \$\_\_\_\_\_ (total enclosed)

Dinner includes:  
Chicken Marsala entree, Tossed Salad, Carrot Cake, Coffee/Tea  
A Cash Bar will be available

The guest speaker will be Judge Don Poole, USAF JAG Officer 1966-1969

The cutoff for reservations is February 13th.

Mail your check to: Chattanooga Area Veterans Council, c/o Mark Parks, Treasurer,  
6920 Sawtooth Drive, Ooltewah, TN, 37363-6894