

**AMVETS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014**



## **OUR MISSION**



**AMVETS National Service Foundation provides support to veterans through service programs as well as providing community and youth-oriented programs designed to promote unity and patriotism. It counsels and represents veterans and their dependants before the Veterans Administration without charge.**

# **AMVETS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**



**★ PRESERVING FREEDOM**

**★ SUPPORTING VETERANS AND ACTIVE MILITARY**

**★ PROVIDING COMMUNITY SERVICES**

# AMVETS National Service Foundation

[www.amvetsnsf.org](http://www.amvetsnsf.org)



## AMVETS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION (NSF) 2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

### HISTORY

AMVETS National Service Foundation was created in 1948 with the goal of helping the unprecedented number of veterans returning from World War II to assimilate back into civilian life. AMVETS National Service Officers (NSOs) and volunteers were trained by AMVETS and were recruited to work directly with these veterans and assisted them with their individual needs.

In addition to assisting those veterans with severe physical and psychological needs, AMVETS National Service Foundation worked with many veterans requiring assistance with disability benefits, the G.I. Bill and housing assistance.

As the Korean War and the wars/conflicts in Vietnam, Grenada, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Panama, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Afghanistan, Iraq and a plethora of other conflicts have created new generations of veterans. AMVETS National Service Foundation has expanded its mission assisting veterans and their dependents in areas such as: identifying and applying for benefits, employment and training, G.I. Bill assistance, Veterans Affairs assistance for care, homeless Veteran assistance as well as assistance with Agent Orange exposure, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Gulf War claims.

AMVETS National Service Foundation's work is important, as we witness further reduction by the Executive Branch towards veterans' services. To turn the tide in favor of veterans, AMVETS National Service Officer's (NSO) work heroically daily on their behalf. Today, using computer technology, our NSOs are even more effective as they work directly online with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our NSOs work tirelessly to cut through bureaucratic red tape and administrative logjams to ensure that the veterans they represent receive all benefits they are entitled to under current law for service connected disabilities. In addition, our National Service Officers work with veterans to help make the difficult transition to civilian life easier.

For more than half a century AMVETS National Service Foundation volunteers have served veterans in VA medical centers across America. Their extraordinary efforts have been all that stand between effective patient care and many hospitals ceasing to function.

AMVETS National Service Foundation is continuing its commitment to freedom made by our veterans, past, present and future. We would like to thank you for your unwavering assistance and generous support. Without you, our veterans would face a far more difficult and uncertain future.



**Dear Friends & Loyal Supporters  
of  
AMVETS National Service Foundation (NSF)**

The Directors and the Staff of the AMVETS National Service Foundation (NSF) join me in paying a tribute to our men and women who have sacrificed through service to their Nation or gave their lives in support of America's vital interests in conflicts around the globe and most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan to protect our freedom here at home. We also pray for the well-being of those who are now back in Iraq, Afghanistan and other parts of the world continuing to carry this heavy burden.

It is with pleasure that I have the opportunity to report on this year's activities of the National Service Foundation.

AMVETS National Service Foundation Fiscal Year 2013/2014 has been a very productive one despite America's current economic conditions. For the twelve months of operations, we have realized excess of revenue over expenses of \$13,807,537

AMVETS National Service Foundation's Planned Giving Program has realized \$275,050 for this Fiscal Year.

Our direct mailing program is below its budgeted goal by approximately \$590,064 due to economic conditions.

A variety of fundamental issues have been addressed in this previous fiscal year that have vastly improved the Thrift Stores and added to the refinement of our operations. These critical improvements have made it possible for the retail thrift stores to move toward increased growth, expansion, and creating a promising future.

During the early part of 2014 the AMVETS National Service Foundation acquired a new Human Resources Director with a comprehensive mission to better align the Human Resources Department to actively partner with the NSF and its joint emphasis on increasing Thrift Store Production and Profitability, as well as adding and supporting the additional growth of our National Service Officers across the country.

In addition, the Human Resources Department is steadily introducing better and more efficient practices and processes that allow Human Resources to move quicker and be more effective in its support of the NSF's mission. One recent addition to the HR toolkit is the introduction of a

HRIS (Human Resources Information System), allowing for access to shared information by senior management, resulting in more timely and accurate decision-making.

As a result of these efforts, there is a renewed collaboration and transparency shared with all whom come into contact with the NSF, our donors, our staff, and most importantly the many men and women of the Armed Forces that the NSF is so proud to serve. As an organization we have focused on Risk Mitigation, thereby conserving more of the NSF's financial assets, allowing more resources to be invested in our programs.

The Thrift Stores have made notable improvements in communications, marketing, store procedures, accounting, and solicitations in the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The overall gross sales of the stores showed a strong improvement in the first quarter; however, in the second quarter, sales were negatively affected by several snow storms and below average temperatures in all regions. The subsequent quarters were spent compensating for the below average sales in the second quarter. A variety of changes have taken place across the organization to create a level of consistency from store to store, improve daily procedures, and refine our near-term, mid-term and long-term operational posture, paving the way for future expansion.

All stores now have a prescribed budget to operate within. Accounting practices have been updated to create a system of checks and balances. Forms used within the company have been updated as well as written procedures established. Communications have been brought up to date with new voice-over-IP phones; computers, internet access, email addresses, and all stores have been linked together with a Thrift Store website. A cloud based file sharing program is being used with accounts created for file sharing and archiving. The result is reduction of office supply costs and creating an efficient means for document management. Improvements have been made to enhance the cleanliness and organization of the stores, the layout of departments, and a general advancement in the appearance and presentation of the stores to create a new look.

Developments in branding and marketing have been accomplished; each store now has AMVETS logo shopping bags, a social media presence, Thrift Store business cards, professionally designed full color tax receipts and sale flyers, employees uniforms with the AMVETS logo along with lanyards and name tags, and new signs have been added to store exteriors. AMVETS Thrift Stores also worked in coordination with the University at Buffalo students and staff members to develop marketing ideas and strategies.

Two new trucks have been purchased and added to the AMVETS fleet as well as seven donated step vans. A computerized solicitations program has been developed as well as online scheduling of donation pickups. A digital database of donors has also been built to retain previous donors and maintain updated contact information for each individual patron. In addition to this, AMVETS is now part of a newly formed organization called the Western New York Coalition of Donated goods that includes other local non-profit organizations as well as local politicians; this has created a greater public awareness of AMVETS missions and goals, increased donations, and formed new relationships in the local community.

The National Service Foundation continues to be cognizant of its primary responsibility to fund the National Service Department and continue growth to areas where our Veteran population is expanding.

We have a total of fifty three (53) National Service Officers (NSO). Forty two are stationed at twenty nine (29) VA regional offices located in twenty five (25) states including the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington D.C. We also have fourteen (14) NSOs assigned fulltime on Department of Defense (DoD) bases at Transition Assistance sites.

We receive many compliments and commendations regarding our NSOs and the way AMVETS handles their claims on their behalf. We believe our service program is second to none. I personally give my sincere appreciation to our National Service Officers whose dedication, expertise and compassion for veterans and their dependents has made our service program the outstanding one that it is today.

The week of fourteen April, the National Service Department conducted its annual training conference for our NSOs in Orlando, Florida. In addition to the four Regional Directors, the conference was attended by 47 National Service Officers, the Pennsylvania Department Executive Director and three of his Department Service Officers (DSO) as well four DSOs from the Department of Illinois; One DSO from the Department of Missouri and one state service officer from Nebraska. We were fortunate to have the National Commander John Mitchel, National Executive Director Stewart Hickey, President of the National Service Foundation (NSF) Jimmy T. Smith and the NSF Executive Director attend this year's conference. Other external dignitaries attending were Terry Eglund, Program Manager and Vice President of BeneVets; Scott Cook Chief for the Compensation Service Training Cadre who presented all of the Gulf War I training; Joshua Quagliaroli, Program Analyst who provided SEP training; Frank Bryceland, Program Analyst who presented eBenefits training; Anna Rivera, Health Systems Specialist, Office Deputy Under Secretary of Health who provided the VHA perspective for the gulf war training and Ryan Steinbach, VSO Liaison, Under Secretary of Health.

We continue our efforts to place NSOs on military installations. New positions for full time NSOs were added at Ft. Belvoir and Quantico, Virginia. We also have requests pending from the Department of Defense to consider placing a full time NSO on Ft Story.

Region 5 was created to balance the supervisory workload of the regional directors. As DoD requests more NSO support for bases in Virginia, this cause a significant increase in the number of offices and NSOs in Region 1. Since all of the NSO and office increases in Virginia send their claims to Roanoke it made sense to make Virginia its own region.

From July 1, 2013 through August 31, 2014, the National Service Officers have submitted 66,586 claims for VA benefits. Of these claims, 54,484 were for disability; 5,190 were re-opened claims; 3,037 were for pension; 1,544 were for death benefits and 2,331 were for educational benefits. Our National Service Officers have contacted 92,584 veterans regarding claims, including 12,043 men and women in the TAP/DTAP programs. They've recovered \$232,721,557 for claimants, with an additional \$168,691,954 in retroactive benefits. This is a grand total of \$401,413,511 in VA benefits awarded for the veterans we represent.

During this same time period, the National Service Department continues providing support to the National Guard around the country. We have a separate report that informs the National



Guard Bureau as well as the National Service Foundation of additional work and expenditures for these operations. As of this report the National Service Officers have presented 89 briefings and have briefed a total of 4,273 National Guard troops and/or their family members. This work is done on weekends at various military installations as well as local armories, or sometimes in an AMVETS Post. Each region has at least one NSO who is the Regional Guard Liaison who works with the Regional Director as well as the AMVETS National Guard Liaison to compile reports and track the briefings around the country. As of the close of June, it has cost the National Service Foundation an additional \$27,168 in NSO lodging, Travel, and Meals. We have noticed a continuing decline in Guard/Reserve support missions as the troop strengths draw-down in the Middle East continue.

The value of the total benefits for FY 2014, by the VA's own calculations, for all running awards represented by AMVETS is worth one billion, five hundred forty-seven million, sixteen thousand, and three hundred four dollars (\$1,547,016,304). Of this, \$1,389,211,852 was for compensation claims. The rest was for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) pension claims and claims for death benefits.

AMVETS NSF continues to acknowledge outstanding veterans and deserving dependents of veterans through its Scholarship Program. During this fiscal year, thirty-one \$4000 scholarships were awarded to veterans. The Scholarship Selection Committee members - John Morrison, Committee Chairman, AMVETS Department of DC; William Allen and Major Lo Catten, (USA Retired), also AMVETS members met in May to select the scholarship recipients. Approximately 1100 applications were received and processed by National Headquarters. I would like to commend the National Second Vice-Commander of Programs and his committee for their dedication and hard work in selecting the recipients of AMVETS scholarships.

This past year, the Foundation's "Because We Care" Program distributed 29,200 personal care kits to hospitalized veterans in 146 VA Medical Centers across the country, and provided 30,000 "thirty-minute" phone cards to our hospitalized veterans in these same VA Medical Centers. This was valued at \$111,890. The Foundation spent \$34,400 to send young adults to Freedoms Foundation. The Foundation also contributed \$103,987 through our Healing Heroes Program.

In the past year, 2,546 AMVETS, AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary and Sons of AMVETS provided a total of 454,483 hours of service in VA Medical Centers throughout the United States. The current monetary value of these hours is \$9,203,280 which is calculated by the Independent Sector Formula at \$20.25 per hour.

AMVETS National Service Foundation once again was a Gold Medal sponsor of the Special Olympics National Unified Bowling Tournament. The National Service Foundation and AMVETS volunteers from all over the nation are quite honored to play a part in this special and rewarding program.

I would now like to take this opportunity to expound on the other entities of the National Service Foundation. The members of the Board of Trustees of AMVETS Charities, Inc., a District of Columbia corporation and AMVETS National Service Foundation are Federally approved as

501(c)(3) exempt organizations. AMVETS Charities, Inc. is incorporated with the purpose of handling funds donated to these separate charities.

AMVETS' Carillon Program continues to receive broad recognition as the finest ongoing program that honors America's veterans.

The relationship with The McCormick Foundation in Chicago, Illinois continues to be strong in the joint effort to place carillons in American Cemeteries overseas. On Memorial Day, AMVETS National Service Foundation and The McCormick Foundation dedicated a Carillon at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial in Nettuno, Italy.

The AMVETS Charities Inc. together with the Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund dedicated our 101st Carillon in Grayson, Kentucky and our 102nd Carillon with the AMVETS Department of Louisiana in Slidell, Louisiana.

The fulfillment of the many duties and responsibilities would not be possible without the dedication and expertise of the entire Board of Trustees.

Both the past and present Board of Trustees of the National Service Foundation have been caring, competent, and dedicated individuals who have worked to solve the problems at hand, but also have been diligent in planning for short-term as well as the long-term future of the organization.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff of the Foundation, I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the AMVETS National Headquarters' staff for the cooperation extended to the National Service Foundation.

To the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank you and extend my deep appreciation for your understanding and support during this last year. I would also like to thank the entire Foundation staff for their continued dedication, and total support of the Veterans which we supported & continue to support through the initiatives of the AMVETS National Service Foundation this past year.

Very Respectfully,



Kent A. D. Clark  
Executive Director  
AMVETS National Service Foundation

# AMVETS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION



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Thank you to our dedicated AMVETS National Service Foundation Staff:

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