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With that all said please contact your Veteran Service Officers to ensure that all your benefits questions/needs are met.

Make sure to put this date on your calendar, April 3 2020. This is the date of our 4th Annual Veterans Fair. More information to follow in the next newsletter in 2020.

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With the holidays coming up and with the weather being unpredictable, I would ask that you call the office to make sure we are here if you are making a special trip as Laurie and I both live out of town. The telephone number for the Crookston Office is (218-281-3066) . Kurt's cell number is 218-280-5506, use this number if you are planning a trip to any of the other satellite offices.

Laurie and I wish all of our Veterans and your family a Happy Holiday Season and hope to see you all soon.

*Kurtis*

*Laurie*

# Armed Forces Service Center at MSP

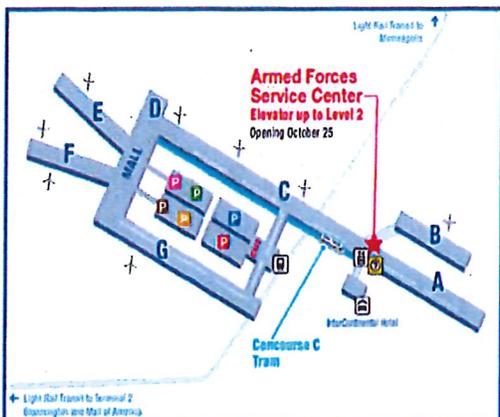
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Center: (612) 726-9155 / Web: [mnaafsc.org](http://mnaafsc.org)



## ID CARDS ELIGIBLE FOR ACCESS TO AFSC



VA Cards are accepted from Purple Heart Recipients, MoH Recipients and Former PoW

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Member ID  
1234567890  
Plan ID (80840)  
1234 567 890  
Member  
JANE D SAMPLE

VA HEALTHCARE ENROLLEE  
SERVICE CONNECTED  
MEDAL OF HONOR  
PURPLE HEART  
FORMER POW



## VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

This quarter's veteran in the spotlight is James Altepeter of Crookston, MN.

James graduated from Cathedral High School and immediately joined the US Navy in July 1966.

I took off for boot camp in San Diego, CA. I was designated as a Corpsman.

After boot camp, I was then sent to a Philadelphia Navy Hospital. I was working in General Surgery and Proctology for one year. I was transferred to North Philly to a Naval Publication and Form Center. We were in charge of all medical treatments, dispensed preliminary medications, and called upon to do physicals and lab work, dental assistants, and perform preventative care, injections and to maintain patient treatment records.

This is where I met my good friend Vernon "Andy" Anderson. He was a corpsmen as I was, we had an apartment together and we both had second jobs at the JFK Hospital in Philadelphia. Andy and I worked nights for one year at our second job.

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**Colonel Julie M. Stola** is the Command Nurse and Chief of Force Development, Air Force District of Washington, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. She oversees nursing operations, develops and executes SG Policy for 1 MTF with over 1.7K personnel delivering outpatient care for over 455K beneficiaries in the National Capital Region. Col Stola is the AFDW/SG's consultant on nursing services and represents AFDW on the AF Nurse Corps Board of Directors.

**Col Stola hales from Shelly, Minnesota.** She graduated from St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing with a Diploma Degree in nursing in 1983. She then attended Moorhead State University and earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1986. Her first nursing duties were as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador from 1986-1988.

In August 1989, Colonel Stola received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force and entered active duty in November, 1989 as a Staff Nurse at Clark AFB, Republic of the Philippines. Since that time she has held various positions as Deputy Surgeon General for AF Central Command, Nurse Manager, Director of Operations, Senior Nurse Executive and Flight Commander in both inpatient and outpatient settings as well as in a flying assignment. Col Stola has deployed on four different occasions, as the Deputy Team Chief for Aeromedical Evacuation, Team Chief for Aeromedical Evacuation, Chief Nurse of a Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility, and most recently as the United States Forces Afghanistan Command Surgeon.



## **EDUCATION**

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1986 Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (Magna Cum Laude), Moorhead State University, Moorhead, MN

1995 Squadron Officer's School (correspondence)

1997 Master's in Nursing (Suma Cum Laude), University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Denver, CO

2002 Air Command and Staff College (correspondence)

2005 Air War College (correspondence)

2006 Intermediate Executive Skills Course, Lackland AFB, TX

2007 Board Certification, Nursing Administration

2013 Joint Senior Medical Leadership Course, JSS/HSSD, The Pentagon

2017 Interagency Institute for Federal Healthcare Executives, USUHS, Bethesda MD

(Continued on Page 8)

"She has left her mark on every organization she's been assigned to," said Shelton. "She doesn't just change things for the sake of change, she makes things better."

For the love of her job, the people she works with, and her country, Stola continues to champion the Air Force mission. Her husband supports her wholeheartedly in every assignment, and every mission.

"He understands that some people are going to have to give a little bit more," Stola said. "And for us that means we aren't always together."

With all she has experienced: tours in the Philippines, Germany, Japan, and seven different states; positions held as a deputy chief nurse, a chief nurse, commander of medical operations squadrons, a flight nurse in an aeromedical evacuation squadron, and a deputy command surgeon; spending the majority of her marriage apart from her husband; Stola now uses her experiences to mentor others.

"She was one of the few people who took me under their wing," Shelton said. "She showed me the ropes and taught me to be a successful flight nurse."

From Stola's experiences, she provides a perfect environment for captains and majors to open up and talk about their lives.

"I mentor a number of different people and some of them like to plan out their next two or three assignments," said Stola.

For Stola, the opportunity to mentor someone is about making sure they see the bigger picture, rather than the one that's right in front of them.

"She uses every opportunity to make a teachable moment," Shelton said. "In that moment, there is always something profound and memorable that is said and learned."

"It's been fun watching some of the people that I've known since they were lieutenants, and now some of them are lieutenant colonels," Stola said.

Stola exhibits the standards and characteristics of an airman who cares about the Air Force and has spent her entire career developing, using, and passing on those standards to the next generation of airmen.

### MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Legion of Merit  
Bronze Star Medal  
Meritorious Service Medal  
Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Air Force Commendation Medal  
Army Commendation Medal  
Air Force Achievement Medal  
Joint Meritorious Unit Award  
AF Outstanding Unit Award with Valor Device  
Air Force Organizational Excellence Award  
Combat Readiness Medal  
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal  
Afghanistan Campaign Medal  
Iraq Campaign Medal  
Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal  
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal  
Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border  
NATO Medal



**A MAN INTERVIEWED** for an office job. The interviewer told him he'd start at \$3,000 a month and that after six months he'd be at \$3,500. The man replied, "I'll start in six months."



**I DON'T MIND** coming to work. It's the eight-hour wait to go home I can't stand.



December 16th, 2019 In cooperation with four local "Hardware Hank" stores there will be a **"BIG BUCK CONTEST"** and a **MRVO FUNDRAISING RAFFLE** drawing at the Thief River Falls Hardware Hank store

January 6th, 2020 **Mens Ice Fishing** on Lake of the Woods

January 20th, 2020 **Ladies Ice Fishing** on Lake of the Woods

January 29th, 2020 **MRVO Sponsoring Veterans and family members** at "NORSKIES" hockey game. Call 218-686-9114 to reserve tickets.

February 21st, 2020 **MRVO Sponsoring Veterans and family members** at "NORSKIES" hockey game. Call 218-686-9114 to reserve tickets.

August 18th-21st, 2020 **Charter Boat Fishing** at "Slims Resort" on Lake of the Woods 24 spots available

To participate in one of our events all you need is the appropriate fishing or hunting license, seasonal outdoor clothing and the desire to have a great time in the company of other veterans.

We furnish food, ammunition, bait, blinds and other supplies. We also have guns and fishing gear for those that need them.

To be considered for any of these events please complete and return the application at least 20 days prior to the event

## Here for You

VA is calling every newly separated service member three times during their first year of separation. From help getting a home loan, to health care, to returning to work, to mental health support – VA is here for you. It's your call. Qualified VA representatives will be reaching out to help you better understand the benefits available to you and help you get a solid start on your civilian life. VA is on the line – take the call!

VA is committed to supporting every service member transitioning from service. As part of your welcome to VA, we want to inform you about what to expect during this critical time and help you build a solid start to your civilian life. New routines, new responsibilities... year one out of the service presents a lot of change, but the stress of change is not a weight you have to carry alone. VA is your partner, and we're here to connect you with direct benefits, as well as resources through partner organizations, to help you navigate these new challenges.



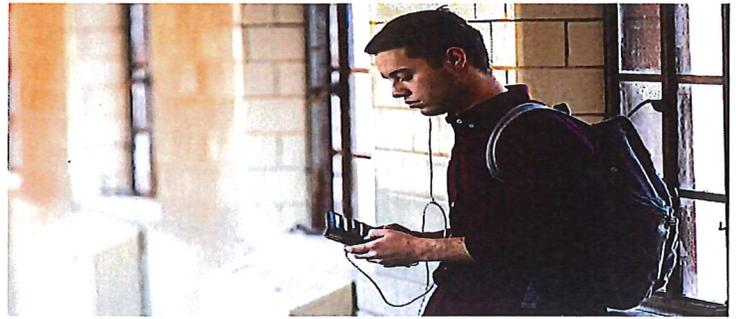
## You Have Resources

If you need support for a specific mental health problem—or if you're having problems sleeping, controlling your anger, or readjusting to civilian life—you are not alone. And we can help. You don't need to be enrolled in VA health care to get care. To access free VA mental health services right away:

**Call or walk in to any VA medical center—anytime, day or night.**

**Call or walk in to any Vet Center during clinic hours.**

**Call us at 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (ET). If you have hearing loss, call TTY: 1-800-877-8339.**



## Yes, VA is Calling

Newly separated service members can expect three calls from qualified Solid Start representatives over the first year of separation. VA will attempt to contact you several times around 90, 180 and 365 days post-separation, so make sure your contact information is up to date in eBenefits. Save **1-800-827-0611** as the contact for VA Solid Start in your phone now, and when you see VA calling - take the call!

VA Solid Start representatives will not ask you for financial information and will only discuss topics you are comfortable with. Remember that phone scammers often target Veterans, so always be vigilant and protect your financial information when talking to someone you don't know over the phone.

## Talk to a Veteran Crisis Line responder now



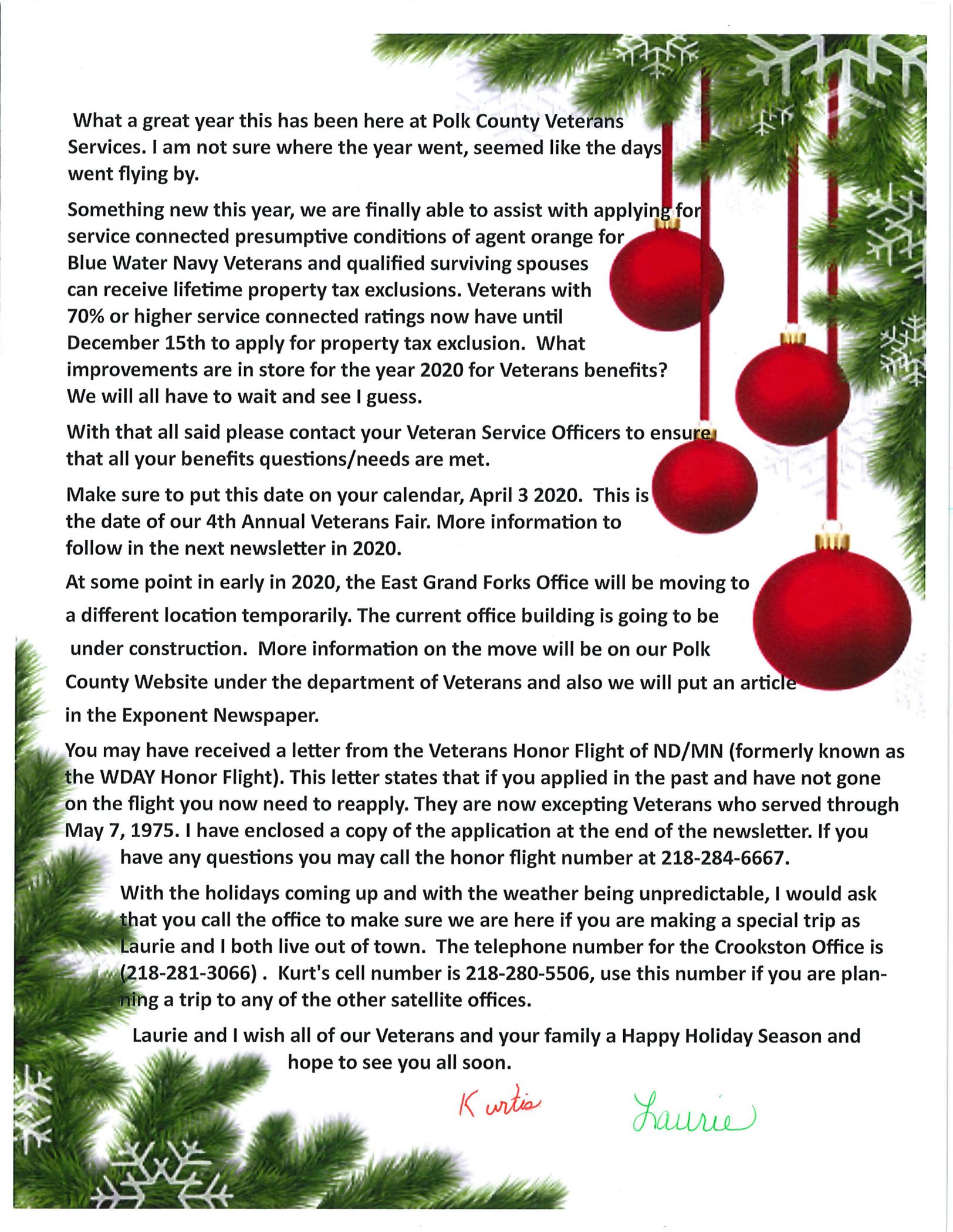
**We're here anytime, day or night – 24/7.** If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with our caring, qualified responders for confidential help. Many of them are Veterans themselves. **Call 800-273-8255 and press 1**

**Text 838255**

**Start a confidential chat**

**Call TTY if you have hearing loss 800-799-48891**

Get more resources at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net).



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# Suicide Prevention

**You can help!**

Pain Isn't Always Obvious

**KNOW  
THE SIGNS**

Suicide Is Preventable

Suicide is preventable. Suicide does not have one single cause. Access to health care, building meaningful relationships, and supportive communities can help protect a person from suicide. You, or someone you know, can get help.

## Warning signs someone might be at risk:

- Talking about wanting to die or killing oneself.
  - Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or purchasing a gun.
  - Talking about feelings of hopelessness or having no purpose.
- Talking about feeling trapped, a burden to others, or being in unbearable pain.
  - Increasing use of alcohol or drugs.
  - Acting increasingly anxious or agitated.
    - Sleeping too little or too much.
    - Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
    - Displaying extreme mood swings.

## What to do:

If you, or someone you know, is at risk of suicide:

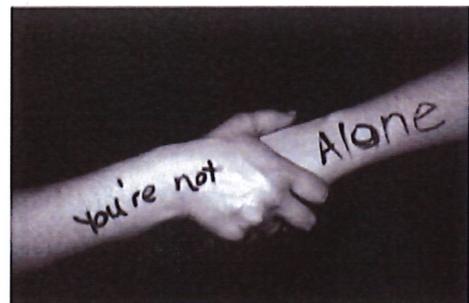
- **Locally, call 1-800-282-5005**—Northwestern Mental Health Center Crisis Line  
*This line provides free and confidential support and resources.*
- **Text MN to 741741** for 24/7 crisis support  
*The Crisis Text Line provides free crisis support for any crisis.*
- **Visit [mn.gov/dhs/crisis](http://mn.gov/dhs/crisis)** to find your local mobile crisis provider.
- **Call 1-800-273-8255** – the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
*The Lifeline provides free and confidential support and resources for you and your loved ones.*
- **Call 911** for immediate medical attention.

## We can all take action:

Providing support, talking about suicide, reducing access to means of self-harm, and following up with loved ones are just some of the actions we can all take to help others.

## Additional information:

- [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- [health.mn.gov/preventsuicide](http://health.mn.gov/preventsuicide)
- [sprc.org](http://sprc.org)



**m** DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH

**RIVERVIEW HEALTH**  
*Exceptional People. Exceptional Care.*

# Armed Forces Service Center at MSP

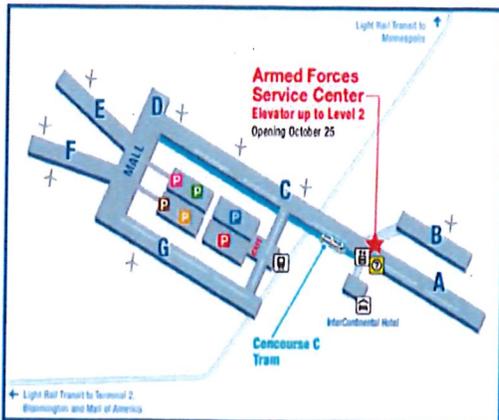
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FORMER POW

**On-Base Eligibility Expands January 1, 2020:** Beginning in the new year more than 3 million service-connected disabled veterans with VA ratings from zero to 90% will be authorized on-base exchange and commissary shopping privileges, as well as access to certain MWR facilities, but you must have a VA-issued Veteran Health Identification Card or VHIC, to gain access. The VHIC is issued only to veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system. You can apply at your local Veteran Service Officer or in person at your local VA medical facility. Family members of the newly eligible veterans will not be authorized to shop, but will be permitted on-base as guests of the VHIC-carrying veteran. Veterans who do not reside near a military installation can still shop online at the four military exchanges. Search for stores at Shop-MyExchange, Marine Corps Exchange, Navy Exchange, and Coast Guard Exchange. Caregivers will be processed differently, initially, since they have no military or VA affiliation. The VA will post a memo to VA.gov for caregivers to be used for access at the front gate, along with a driver's license. This process is expected to transition to a caregiver-type Id Card, which will have scanning swipe capability. One hundred percent disabled veterans, their spouses, and eligible dependents already have access because they are issued military identification cards. If you have questions on how to get on base at the GF AFB please call (701) 747-4283, Visitor Control Center.

**Q: Are all veterans eligible for in-person commissary, exchange and morale, welfare and recreation privileges on Department of Defense Installations?**

**A:** No. Unless otherwise authorized commissary, exchange and MWR access, only veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, veterans who are former prisoners of war or veterans who have a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability rating of 0-90 percent are authorized in-person privileges beginning on Jan. 1, 2020, as provided for in the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, veterans eligible solely under this act who have been issued a Veteran Health Identification Card from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to DoD and Coast Guard installations and some commissaries, exchanges and MWR retail activities to complete their transactions. The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED).

Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enroll in VA health care, or who are enrolled in VA health care, but do not possess a VHIC will not have access to DoD and Coast Guard installations for in-person commissary, exchange and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

While not all veterans are eligible for in-person privileges on DoD and Coast Guard installations, all honorably discharged veterans are eligible for online military exchange shopping through the Veterans Online Shopping Benefit. To access your online shopping benefit, veterans not eligible for in-person privileges should follow the instructions to establish an account at any of the following military exchange websites, or the VA's Veterans Canteen Service:

- Army and Air Force Exchange System: <https://www.shopmyexchange.com>
- Coast Guard Exchange: <https://shopCGX.com>
- Marine Corps Exchange: <http://www.mymcx.com>
- Navy Exchange: <https://www.mynavyexchange.com>
- Veterans Canteen Service: <https://shopvcs.va.gov>

**A MAN** was driving when he noticed the flash of a traffic camera. He figured that his picture had been taken for speeding, even though he knew he wasn't. Just to be sure, he went around the block and passed the same spot, driving even more slowly. Again the camera flashed. Thinking this was funny, he drove past even slower three more times, laughing as the camera flashed each time he drove by at a snail's pace. Two weeks later, he received five tickets in the mail for driving without a seat belt.



**I WAS BRUSHING** my teeth when my squad leader barged in. He was holding a toothbrush, which he used to scrub under the rim of a toilet. "What are you doing?" I asked. "Hazing the new guy," he said. "You do know that he could get ill from the bacteria on the toilet." His reply: "You didn't."





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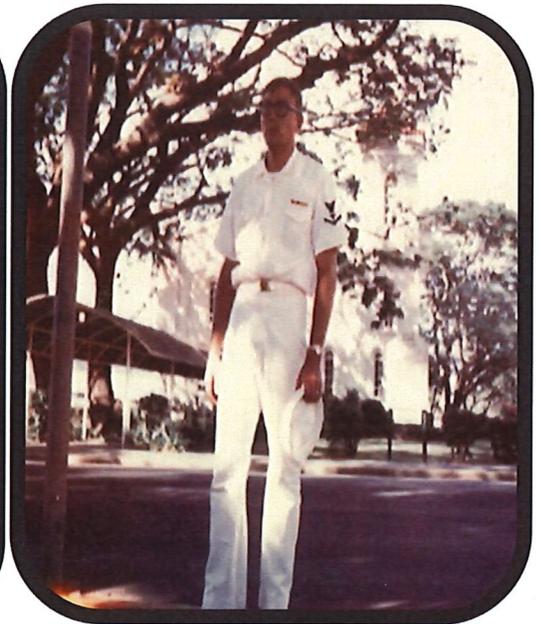
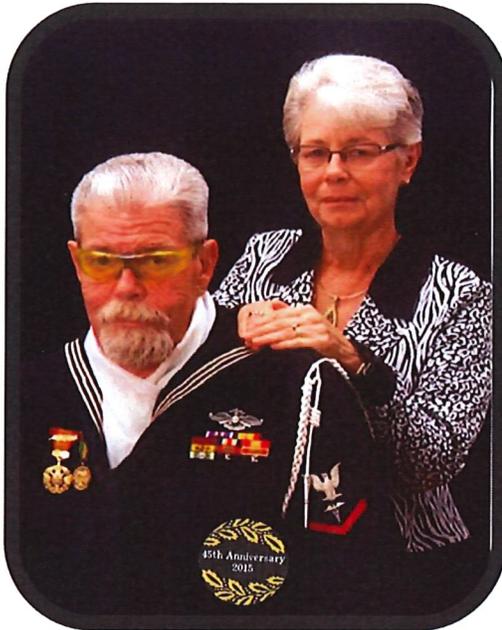
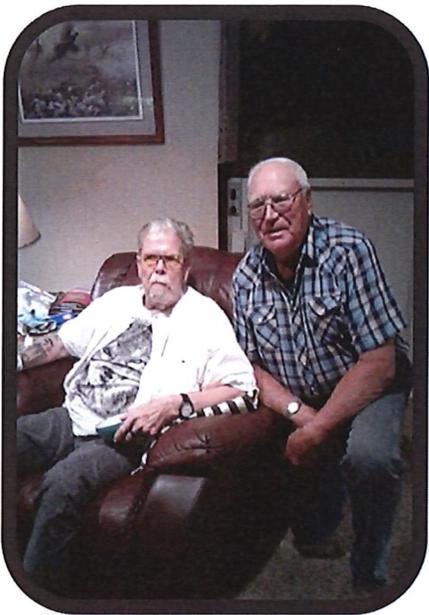
I told her who I was and she turned the phone over to her husband, Andy. He could not believe it was me and was at a loss for words. As it turns out he had tried to contact me a few times himself without any luck. We planned on a get together and shortly after we talked, he had a stroke and we were not able to see each other at that time.

On July 13, 2019, I received a phone call from his wife: she said you better come down if you want to see Andy. He wasn't doing very well.

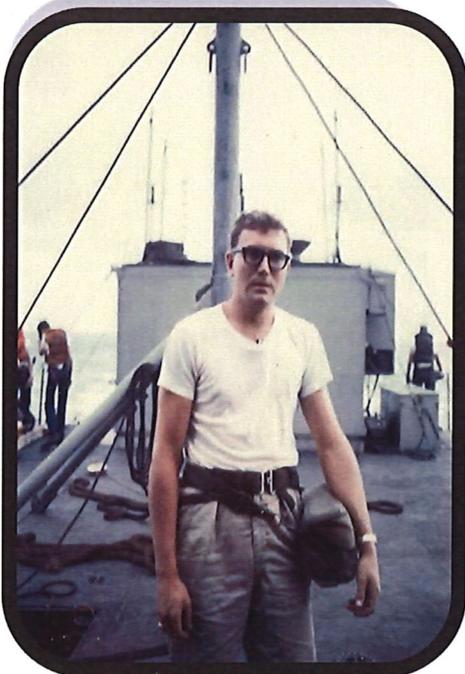
On July 15th my future son-in-law, a veteran himself, decided to make the trip with me to Sioux Falls, SD. The anticipation of seeing each other after all these years, we were finally there. We met him and his wife at his home. There were hugs and big smiles. It seemed like we were never apart, we picked up right where we left off. And for a couple of days we were just happy to see each other again. We will continue to correspond with each other.

Andy retired as a Federal Employee. He went all over the country inspecting the VA facilities.

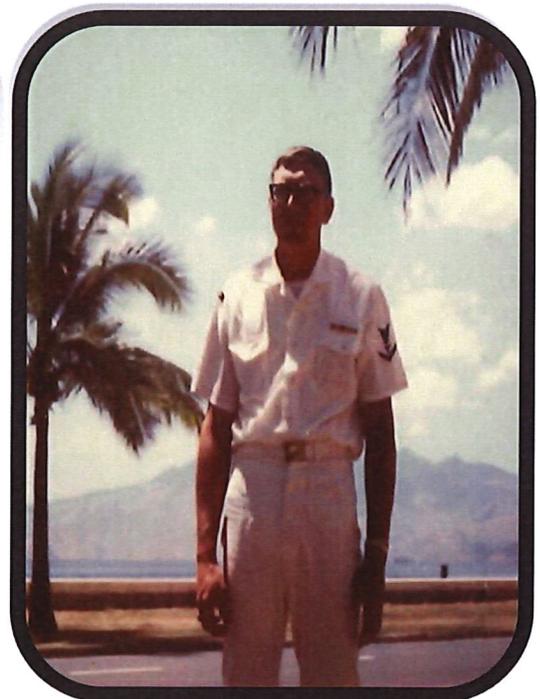
**If you have a friend out there, don't wait, try to contact them.**



Andy and his wife



James



**Colonel Julie M. Stola** is the Command Nurse and Chief of Force Development, Air Force District of Washington, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. She oversees nursing operations, develops and executes SG Policy for 1 MTF with over 1.7K personnel delivering outpatient care for over 455K beneficiaries in the National Capital Region. Col Stola is the AFDW/SG's consultant on nursing services and represents AFDW on the AF Nurse Corps Board of Directors.

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- 1995 Squadron Officer's School (correspondence)
- 1997 Master's in Nursing (Suma Cum Laude), University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Denver, CO
- 2002 Air Command and Staff College (correspondence)
- 2005 Air War College (correspondence)
- 2006 Intermediate Executive Skills Course, Lackland AFB, TX
- 2007 Board Certification, Nursing Administration
- 2013 Joint Senior Medical Leadership Course, JSS/HSSD, The Pentagon
- 2017 Interagency Institute for Federal Healthcare Executives, USUHS, Bethesda MD

(Continued on Page 8)

**SHAW AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.** – Earning her commission in 1989, Col. Julie Stola, U.S. Air Forces Central deputy command surgeon, stepped into the wild blue yonder and began the most challenging and exciting chapter of her life.

“I wanted to travel, I wanted additional education, and I wanted to do aeromedical evacuation,” said Stola. “I realized that the people that I went to school with were still doing the same thing, and I just didn’t want to do that.”

Stola had already earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing in 1986. She served in the Peace Corps prior to applying for her commission and was used to a life of adventure and travel, she said. Rural Minnesota in the fall of 1988 created a sharp contrast to Ecuador in the summer, she continued.

Stola stands atop the pillar of accomplished women in the Air Force. Her achievements can be directly correlated to her love, desire, and passion for people.

“Stola exemplifies core values in everything she does,” said Lt. Col. Michele Shelton, 52nd Medical Operations Squadron commander, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. “She a genuinely kind person, but on top of that, she is open and honest even if it’s not what you want to hear.”

Shelton met Stola at Scott AFB, Ill., while Stola was the director of operations with the 375th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

In December of 1989, Stola was assigned to the 13th Medical Unit, Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines.

“We actually almost didn’t get to Clark,” said Stola. “The NPA was acting up, so our assignment was on hold; we were on and off for six weeks of training.”

In 1990 though, the New People’s Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, started a movement to bring back the ways of communism from the 1960s.

Stola started her career at Clark AB, which at the time had a large regional medical center.

“I had great medical surgical training, along with some in-patient pediatrics training,” said Stola.

After the Philippines, Stola was sent to Wiesbaden Air Station, Germany.

One of the best things that ever happened to Stola in the military was that she was introduced to her husband, she said. They were introduced in 1992, in the medical group hospital building elevator, she continued.

While this was one of the best things to happen to her, it wasn’t without its trials. Stola and her husband have spent more of their marriage apart than together.

Stola and her husband have only been stationed together once during her career since Wiesbaden AS.

“At our last assignment together, she didn’t want to deploy for a year and leave her husband alone in a foreign land,” said Shelton. “However, she accepted the challenge to forward deploy knowing that it may put a strain on her personally.”

Stola said that it has been harder for them as a couple since her husband separated from the military. “We wanted to get assignments where my husband could be employed,” she said.

Stola’s husband is a physician, and would normally build a clientele in one area and work there. Moving around with his wife would entail dropping all his patients and finding new ones every two or three years.

“We’ve spent a lot of time geographically separated,” Stola said. “This is extremely challenging, I don’t think most people understand how many women end up being geographically separated because their spouse can’t work.”

While she was stationed as the chief nurse for the 374th Medical Group, Yokota AB, Japan, her husband would spend six months with her in Japan, then fly back to the states to work for six months, Stola said.

Despite all the hardships in her personal life, Stola shows excellence in all she does.

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"She has left her mark on every organization she's been assigned to," said Shelton. "She doesn't just change things for the sake of change, she makes things better."

For the love of her job, the people she works with, and her country, Stola continues to champion the Air Force mission. Her husband supports her wholeheartedly in every assignment, and every mission.

"He understands that some people are going to have to give a little bit more," Stola said. "And for us that means we aren't always together."

With all she has experienced: tours in the Philippines, Germany, Japan, and seven different states; positions held as a deputy chief nurse, a chief nurse, commander of medical operations squadrons, a flight nurse in an aeromedical evacuation squadron, and a deputy command surgeon; spending the majority of her marriage apart from her husband; Stola now uses her experiences to mentor others.

"She was one of the few people who took me under their wing," Shelton said. "She showed me the ropes and taught me to be a successful flight nurse."

From Stola's experiences, she provides a perfect environment for captains and majors to open up and talk about their lives.

"I mentor a number of different people and some of them like to plan out their next two or three assignments," said Stola.

For Stola, the opportunity to mentor someone is about making sure they see the bigger picture, rather than the one that's right in front of them.

"She uses every opportunity to make a teachable moment," Shelton said. "In that moment, there is always something profound and memorable that is said and learned."

"It's been fun watching some of the people that I've known since they were lieutenants, and now some of them are lieutenant colonels," Stola said.

Stola exhibits the standards and characteristics of an airman who cares about the Air Force and has spent her entire career developing, using, and passing on those standards to the next generation of airmen.

**MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

- Legion of Merit
- Bronze Star Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Joint Service Commendation Medal
- Air Force Commendation Medal
- Army Commendation Medal
- Air Force Achievement Medal
- Joint Meritorious Unit Award
- AF Outstanding Unit Award with Valor Device
- Air Force Organizational Excellence Award
- Combat Readiness Medal
- Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
- Afghanistan Campaign Medal
- Iraq Campaign Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border
- NATO Medal



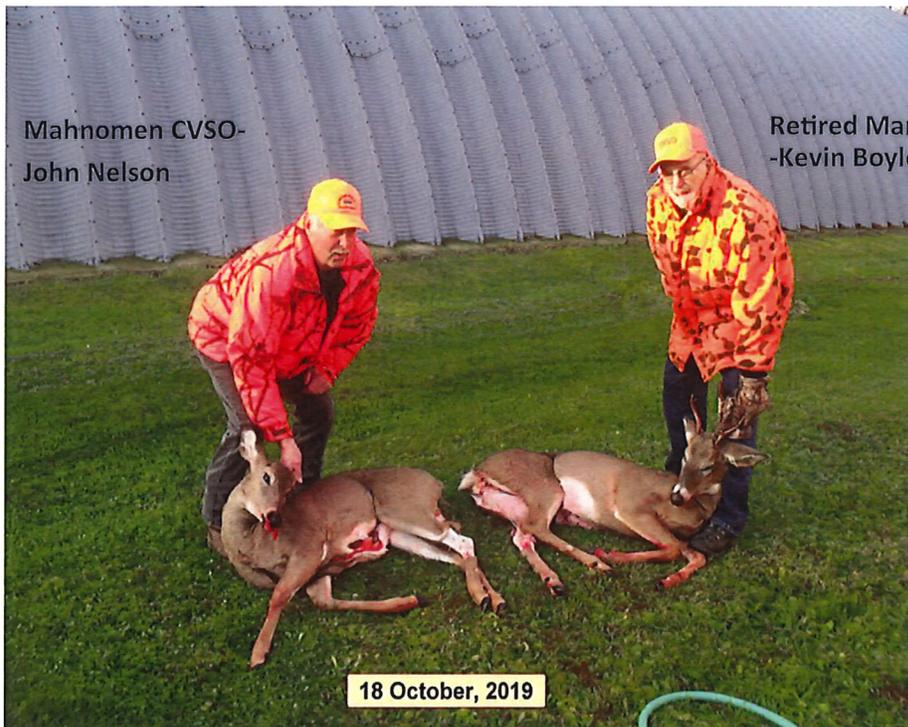
**A MAN INTERVIEWED** for an office job. The interviewer told him he'd start at \$3,000 a month and that after six months he'd be at \$3,500. the man replied, "I'll start in six months."

**I DON'T MIND** coming to work. It's the eight-hour wait to go home I can't stand.



**MIDDLE RIVER**  
**-VETERANS**  **OUTDOORS-**  
 P.O. Box 66  
 Middle River, MN 56737

Pictures of 2019, VETERANS OUTDOORS events and calendar of events



**Deer Hunting Blind  
For Track Chair**



December 16th, 2019 In cooperation with four local "Hardware Hank" stores there will be a **"BIG BUCK CONTEST"** and a **MRVO FUNDRAISING RAFFLE** drawing at the Thief River Falls Hardware Hank store

January 6th, 2020 **Mens Ice Fishing** on Lake of the Woods

January 20th, 2020 **Ladies Ice Fishing** on Lake of the Woods

January 29th, 2020 **MRVO Sponsoring Veterans and family members** at "NORSKIES" hockey game. Call 218-686-9114 to reserve tickets.

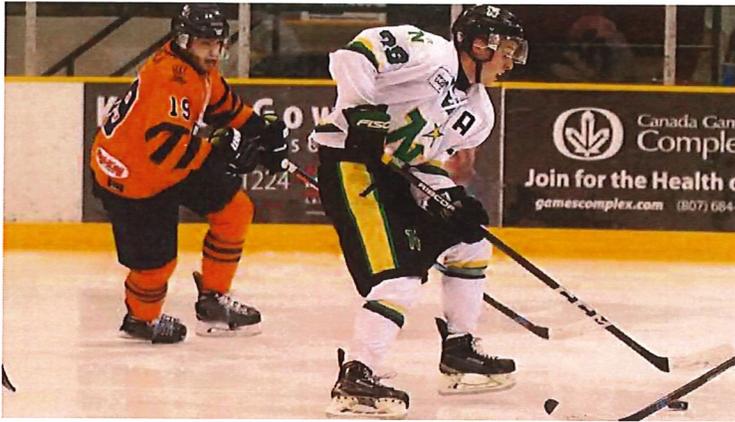
February 21st, 2020 **MRVO Sponsoring Veterans and family members** at "NORSKIES" hockey game. Call 218-686-9114 to reserve tickets.

August 18th-21st, 2020 **Charter Boat Fishing** at "Slims Resort" on Lake of the Woods 24 spots available

To participate in one of our events all you need is the appropriate fishing or hunting license, seasonal outdoor clothing and the desire to have a great time in the company of other veterans.

We furnish food, ammunition, bait, blinds and other supplies. We also have guns and fishing gear for those that need them.

To be considered for any of these events please complete and return the application at least 20 days prior to the event



**MIDDLE RIVER  
VETERANS OUTDOORS  
AND**



**HOST**

**TRF NORSKIE'S HOCKEY!  
WEDNESDAY JAN 29<sup>TH</sup> 7 PM  
FRIDAY FEB 21<sup>ST</sup> 7 PM**

Free Tickets and concession coupons  
available for **Veterans** and **family**  
members



THIEF RIVER FALLS  
**NORSKIES**

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IF  
INTERESTED,  
PLEASE  
CALL  
WAYNE  
KILEN  
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218-686-9114  
TO RESERVE  
YOUR SPOT

## Here for You

VA is calling every newly separated service member three times during their first year of separation. From help getting a home loan, to health care, to returning to work, to mental health support – VA is here for you. It's your call. Qualified VA representatives will be reaching out to help you better understand the benefits available to you and help you get a solid start on your civilian life. VA is on the line – take the call!

VA is committed to supporting every service member transitioning from service. As part of your welcome to VA, we want to inform you about what to expect during this critical time and help you build a solid start to your civilian life. New routines, new responsibilities... year one out of the service presents a lot of change, but the stress of change is not a weight you have to carry alone. VA is your partner, and we're here to connect you with direct benefits, as well as resources through partner organizations, to help you navigate these new challenges.



## Yes, VA is Calling

Newly separated service members can expect three calls from qualified Solid Start representatives over the first year of separation. VA will attempt to contact you several times around 90, 180 and 365 days post-separation, so make sure your contact information is up to date in eBenefits. Save **1-800-827-0611** as the contact for VA Solid Start in your phone now, and when you see VA calling - take the call!

VA Solid Start representatives will not ask you for financial information and will only discuss topics you are comfortable with. Remember that phone scammers often target Veterans, so always be vigilant and protect your financial information when talking to someone you don't know over the phone.

## Talk to a Veteran Crisis Line responder now



**We're here anytime, day or night – 24/7.** If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with our caring, qualified responders for confidential help. Many of them are Veterans themselves. **Call 800-273-8255 and press 1**

**Text 838255**

[Start a confidential chat](#)

[Call TTY if you have hearing loss 800-799-48891](#)

Get more resources at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net).



## You Have Resources

If you need support for a specific mental health problem—or if you're having problems sleeping, controlling your anger, or readjusting to civilian life—you are not alone. And we can help. You don't need to be enrolled in VA health care to get care. To access free VA mental health services right away:

**Call or walk in to any VA medical center—anytime, day or night.**

**Call or walk in to any Vet Center during clinic hours.**

**Call us** at 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (ET). If you have hearing loss, call TTY: 1-800-877-8339.