

Support Serve Advocate



Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs

HOOSIER VETERAN

Newsletter

December 2025

**From the Indiana Department
of Veterans Affairs Director,
Jake Adams**

Hoosier Veterans, Families, and Friends, As 2025 draws to a close, we pause to reflect on a year of meaningful progress and unwavering commitment to Indiana's veterans. Your IDVA team has worked tirelessly to ensure every veteran receives the care, respect, and opportunities earned through service. This yearly wrap-up is a testament to what we achieve together—thank you for your trust and partnership.

As the holiday season arrives, may your homes be filled with warmth, your hearts with gratitude, and your tables with loved ones. Whether you're gathering with family, friends, or connecting with battle buddies know that IDVA stands with you in spirit and service. Happy Holidays from our family to yours. Here's to a bright 2026—stronger, together.



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Honoring Hoosier Heroes: The Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery

Nestled in the hills of Madison, Indiana, the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery stands as a profound tribute to the brave men and women who have served our nation. Opened in 1999, the state veterans cemetery serves as a final resting place for eligible veterans and their families, embodying gratitude for their service and sacrifice. The cemetery's beautifully maintained grounds are rows of pristine white headstones aligned in perfect formation—a visual reminder of the discipline and honor that defined the lives interred here. As of 2025, it is the final home to over 3,200 veterans from conflicts spanning World War II to the present day, including Korea, Vietnam, and recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The cemetery offers both traditional in-ground burials and columbarium niches for cremated remains, ensuring options that respect personal and family wishes. The administration building features a committal shelter for services, and the grounds include memorials and flag displays that evoke a sense of solemn pride. (Continued on next page)



Beyond burials, the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery is a space for healing. Families visit to pay respects, communities gather for Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances, and the quiet beauty of the grounds offers solace amid grief. The cemetery also participates in other cherished traditions like Wreaths Across America, where volunteers place evergreen wreaths on headstones each December, speaking the names of the fallen aloud to "Remember, Honor, and Teach." Last year alone 1,970 wreaths were laid at the cemetery.

In a state rich with military history—from the Indiana War Memorial in Indianapolis to national sites like Marion National Cemetery—this Madison gem provides a personal, local haven to honor their loved ones.

If you or a loved one is exploring burial benefits, visit the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs website for more information.

Thank you to our veterans—past, present, and future. Your legacy lives on.

Saturday, December 13, 2025

Wreaths Across America is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring veterans by remembering the fallen, honoring those who serve, and teaching future generations the value of freedom. Founded in 2007 after Maine businessman Morrill Worcester began placing wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery in 1992, the program has grown into a nationwide movement. Each December, volunteers across all 50 states and abroad participate in National Wreaths Across America Day by laying wreaths on veterans' graves at more than 5,200 locations. Beyond the annual event, the organization runs year-round initiatives such as Wreaths Across America Radio, educational programs for youth, and a traveling Mobile Education Exhibit to share its mission Wreaths Across America. Together, these efforts ensure that the service and sacrifice of America's veterans are never forgotten.



County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) Spotlight

Katie Jordan—Allen County

From the front lines of Afghanistan to the front desk of a County Veteran Service Office, one local advocate has turned her military experience into a mission of service for others.

After beginning her service in the Florida National Guard, Katie Jordan quickly transitioned to active duty with the U.S. Army, deploying to Afghanistan in 2011 with the 159th Aviation Brigade.



After the military and with a degree in Sociology and Social Work, she discovered her calling after meeting a County Veteran Service Officer. "That's the job I want," she said—and she's been serving veterans ever since. To add, having experienced the challenges of military transition firsthand, she's passionate about guiding others through it. "I want veterans to know what's available to them—especially here in Indiana." One of her most memorable moments was helping a single mother avoid homelessness through a successful disability claim. "She came back just to thank me and give me a hug. That's why I do this."

Her office works closely with local veteran organizations to connect veterans with resources that match their needs and interests. "We're not the VA—we're advocates. We help make the process clearer and more personal."

Her advice? "Reach out. Every state and county offers different benefits—you might be missing out."

What keeps her going? "Knowing I'm making a difference in a veteran's tomorrow."

Katie Jordan

[City County Building](#)
[1 East Main St, Room 106](#)
[Fort Wayne, IN 46802](#)

katie.jordan@allencounty.in.gov

Allen County



[Find YOUR CVSO](#)





IDVA Employee Spotlight



Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Operations Director Bryan Schmidt

This month we're featuring the IDVA Operations Director, Bryan Schmidt, a Marine Corps veteran who brings the same high-energy to IDVA that he brings to mile 90 of a 100-mile trail race (yes, you read that right)...100 miles on purpose!

Bryan served in Security Forces in Southwest Asia and later deployed as an infantry squad leader. Since trading in his cammies for khakis, he's been on a mission for Hoosier veterans: from County Veterans Service Officer → to District Service Officer → to Health & Wellness Director → and now, the guy who keeps the whole operation running (literally and figuratively).

He and his wife Melissa have been married 13 years, and while they don't have kids, they do have one very pampered dog named Niko, who may or may not believe he's the boss. Every year, they check off a new country and a new national park—because apparently "relaxing" vacations are for other people. During COVID, they even hit every Indiana state park. Because of course they did. Bryan used to run marathons and Ironman races, but eventually decided 26.2 miles just wasn't enough suffering. Now he runs 100-mile ultramarathons for fun. We assume he's powered by grit, electrolytes, and a questionable amount of trail mix.

Thanks for your service, Bryan—both overseas and right here at home. Semper Fi!



Focused Energy Runner Athletic Fun
Driven Upbeat Enthusiastic Spontaneous
Hard Worker Dedicated Health Insane Strong
Passionate Friendly Crayons Energetic Silly
Hyper Loud Socialite Happy Outgoing Eager
Leader Anxiety Optimistic Focused Ironman
Amazing Thorough Marine Detail Motivated
Tattoos Principled Goofball Hard Working
Walking Human Resource Vegetables Egg
Bites Ridiculous Understanding Focused



Veterans Savings

Across the country many are gearing up for the annual Christmas spending surge—an exciting time filled with gift-giving, festive décor, and family celebrations. Amid the flurry, many veterans are finding smart ways to stretch their dollars by taking advantage of exclusive discounts offered at veteran-friendly companies. These stores honor military service by providing meaningful savings. Check out some of the businesses below by clicking on the logos!





Veteran Affairs Benefits and Healthcare

New scam: VA Benefits overpayment

- ★ Common tactics used by scammers
- ★ How to protect yourself
- ★ How to report VA overpayment scams

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RESEARCH
WRAP UP

VA Research Wrap Up:

New findings on suicide screenings, exercise, and alcohol withdrawal

VA reduces backlog of Veterans waiting for VA benefits by 57%



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Powered by AI, VA is improving Veteran care experience



Military & Veteran Community Observances



December

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
Awareness Month



- 1 Civil Air Patrol Birthday**
- 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day**
- 13 U.S. National Guard Birthday**
- 13 Wreaths Across America Day**
- 16 Battle of the Bulge (1944)**
- 20 Space Force Birthday**
- 26 George Washington's Delaware Crossing (1776)**



	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sun	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Hanukkah	Sat	27
28	29	30	31	Christmas		



IDVA Calendar of Events

[IDVA Calendar of Events](#)



Do YOU have an event you want to share?

[Submit Your Veteran Event](#)



**Stay connected!
Join our IDVA text
system today!**

**Text IDVA to
79848**

**You will only receive
messages curated just
for you!**

317.232.3910

outreach@dva.in.gov

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Our Website](#)

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