

Newsletter Date

Business Name

Volume 1, Issue 1

Lead Story Headline

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Colleagues and friends,

These are trying times for our campus, country, and world. The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused widespread social and economic disruption in the United States and over 2,000 deaths. As a majority of Americans shelter-in-place to help decrease disease spread, our national healthcare networks along with our local, state, and federal leadership attempt to marshal the capacity needed to address the impacts of the pandemic. There are many individuals who are still working outside their homes in positions that support American's essential needs, everything from healthcare workers to grocery store clerks, all doing their part to keep our country healthy, strong, and functioning at a basic level. We must all do our part to support those on the front lines - we are all in this together.

On March 26th, the coronavirus claimed its first victim in North Dakota - 93 year old Navy veteran Roger Lehne. Roger enlisted in the Navy at 17 near the end of World War II. After his service, he earned his master's degree and taught school for many years (he also served as vice principal at Mahnommen High School). You can pay your respects to Roger at his [online guestbook](#). While Roger is the first North Dakotan to be lost to the virus, he most certainly won't be the last. As fatality rates climb, may we always remember that these losses are devastating for the families of the deceased. This is the time for us to offer support and kindness where we can. God bless Roger, may he rest in peace.



The NDSU campus will not be filled with students, staff, and faculty for many months; however, that doesn't mean we are not here for our students and community. If you need us, please reach out. We know that there is a sadness that comes with being away from the campus, but it is a necessity of the times we are in. We will get through this. Until we meet again, stay safe.

Carol Cwiak, J.D., Ph.D.
 VALOR Faculty Liaison

Did you know...

- Now is a great time to catch up on your VALOR Ally training!
ndsuh.edu/valor/readings/
- SVA has a FAQ page about coronavirus and the GI Bill.
<https://studentveterans.org/aboutus/government-affairs/covid-19-faq>
- April is the Month of the Military Child.
<https://militarybenefits.info/month-of-the-military-child/>
- Recruit Military is hosting a series of virtual job fairs for veterans.
<https://success.recruitmilitary.com/events/schedule>



VCO Update
Jim Stoddard

You can visit Jim on campus at the Veterans Educational Training Office in Ceres 329; or by phone at 701-231-9706; or by email at james.stoddard@ndsu.edu.



In an [update to the campus community](#) President Bresciani addressed:

- The status of face-to-face instruction and other campus functions
- Faculty, staff and student-employee work-from-home arrangements
- Spring graduation
- Students living in campus housing
- Campus buildings
- Travel

The first things I would highlight this month are related to the COVID-19 disruptions:

- Students with concerns or questions about their GI Bill benefit payments, especially housing allowance rates, due to withdrawal or because of transition to all online courses, should contact NDSU's certifying official, Scott Fuller (scott.fuller@ndsu.edu).
- Per existing law, students only attending online are not paid the full housing allowance, but not surprisingly, existing law and policy didn't cover involuntary situations due to national health emergencies.
- Thanks to urgent lobbying from several veteran advocacy groups, such as the Student Veterans of America, and the National Association of Veteran Program Administrators, several policy and legislative changes have been approved to minimize any negative financial impact to students. Not all of these changes are permanent, so students should coordinate questions about their unique situation with the NDSU's certifying official.
- Through the end of the semester, my office will be conducting weekly e-mail contacts to the approximately 400 undergraduate military-connected NDSU students to make service referrals as needed to successfully complete the semester and get squared away for next term. This is part of a campus-wide initiative from the office of the Dean of Students to contact all undergrads this way.
- We had to cancel our spring series of monthly health-related presentations on topics of special interest to military students. This series will resume in the fall with sessions that feature subject matter experts from the Fargo VA HCS.

Student veterans are encouraged to respond to two surveys from the Student Veterans of America; both designed to gather data that will allow better national-level advocacy: the Life Cycle Atlas Survey seeks information on the general student veteran experience (<https://atlas.studentveterans.org/>); and, a survey on the impacts to your education from the Coronavirus crisis (https://bit.ly/SVA_COVID).

Some other projects we're working on:

- Members of VALOR, Bison Student Veterans, and other NDSU military allies will participate in the fall semester's Welcome Week by hosting a table for military-connected students at the Affinity Dinner event. This event is a chance for new students to meet informally with staff and student hosts over dinner in one of the NDSU dining centers to learn about NDSU veteran support programs and get tips on being successful.
- Webinars designed to educate campus staff and faculty on better supporting student veterans will resume in the fall semester. The VA's VITAL Program national office arranges guest speakers on special topics, and NDSU employees gather to listen and discuss implementing best practices to support our local students.
- A reminder that the next [NASPA Symposium on Military-Connected Students](#) is scheduled for February 2021 in Denver, CO, a short trip from Fargo! NDSU is an institutional member of NASPA, which allows employees to attend the conference at a lower rate by purchasing an "affiliate" membership, but you don't need to be a NASPA member to attend. An "early bird" registration discount applies until late November. Speakers and session topics cover many areas of student affairs and military student engagement, not just those directly involved in veteran services. Copies of many of the March 2020 symposium presentations are now available to our off-campus partners on the VET website (<https://www.ndsu.edu/vet/>), they are also in the "VALOR" folder on the cross-departmental X: drive (for NDSU-connected VALOR board member access).



Veteran's Voice

Craig Schwinden

VALOR Student Veteran Representative

Greetings Student Vets,

Some crazy things are happening in this world since our last newsletter, huh? These are interesting times to be sure, but as usual, I'm sure we will be fine. I am also sure that we as a student population will be fine as well. Our university is looking out for their student population and the Congress, with the help of some of our off-campus friends (see Jim Stoddard's update in this issue) are working to take care of us student veterans. If you haven't already been informed one way or the other, you're G.I. Bill benefit will likely not change for the current semester even though the delivery method

(face-to-face to online) of NDSU classes has changed.

On March 21st, President Trump, signed into law Senate Bill S.3503. This law covers monthly housing benefits for users of the various chapters of the G. I. Bill. There are still some details to be worked out, but it looks as though your monthly housing allowance will be unchanged for those students who are taking "face-to-face" (or resident) classes, but now have to take their classes online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This authorization is scheduled to last up to, and including, December 21, 2020. The upcoming fall semester at NDSU ends on December 18, 2020 of this year. As I stated earlier, there may be some details yet to be worked out. I encourage you to follow updates on the VA's G.I. Bill Facebook page ([facebook.com/gibillEducation/](https://www.facebook.com/gibillEducation/)) or their website (<https://www.va.gov/education/>).

On another note, make sure you are asking for, and getting help with, ANY issue you are/may be having. We all react to good and

bad things in life differently and there is no dishonor in needing help (or asking for it) if you are struggling academically, emotionally, physically or otherwise. This is also true even when there isn't a global pandemic. There are literally dozens of agencies on and off campus that are there to assist you.

As I mentioned in last month's article, we have some great off campus partners working hard on your behalf so you get the benefits you've earned and be successful in the military service of your choice, in the classroom, and in your community. Unfortunately, these people and organizations are in the same boat as the rest of us and aren't available to engage in-person, so meetings, fund-raisers, and other get-togethers are canceled for now as one might expect. We'll keep you posted on any changes.

As always, feel free to contact me with comments or suggestions at craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu. Hang in there and follow recommendations from the proper authorities by hunkering down until you hear the "ALL CLEAR." Take care.

Warriors In the North: Veteran Healing Through Art

Fargo Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care System and the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County in Moorhead, Minn., in a joint effort, are partnering on a creative art exhibit with a series of public events featuring local veterans' journey in trauma recovery in the fall and winter of 2020 and 2021.

They are recruiting veterans who may be interested in becoming involved in one or more of several projects:

- A mask making event will be held on May 29, 1-4 p.m., at the Fargo VA Medical Center. Veterans interested in participating in this opportunity should call Dr. Margo Norton of the Fargo VA HCS, at (701) 239-3700 extension 3150.
- A four-session veterans writing workshop series will be held in August – exact dates have yet to be determined - at the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County. Veterans interested in participating in this opportunity should call Amy Tichy at (218) 766-8795.
- A local veteran artist is recruiting for veterans who would be willing to sit for a photo shoot, while sharing their military experiences. Veterans interested in participating in this opportunity should call Dr. Ken Andersen at (701) 371-4735 or e-mail k.andersen.studio@gmail.com.
- A local Veteran musician is looking for Veterans interested in being paired with local songwriters to assist in putting a difficult military experience or trauma to words and music. Veterans interested in participating in this opportunity should call Dan Hudson at (701) 306-6870.

THE SPOTLIGHT

Chase Tozer

Major/Minor: Mechanical Engineering/Spanish

Originally from: Maple Grove, MN

Current city: Fargo, ND

Career plans after college: Military/Civilian Pilot

Military Service: Minnesota Air National Guard – 133 Airlift Wing – C-130 Loadmaster; August 2015 – Present (Staff Sergeant); 2017 Deployment (Kuwait)

Awards/Medals Received: Air Medal, GWOT Expeditionary Medal, Expeditionary Airman of the Month

NDSU activities/engagement: Bison Student Veterans Vice-President, undergraduate engineering research

Community activities/engagement: Active member at CrossFit 701, MN National Guard Youth Camp Counselor since 2013

College scholarships, awards, etc.: Presidential Scholarship, Dean's List (5 semesters)

An interesting tidbit about the veteran: I'm always trying to learn new hobbies. I am advanced scuba dive certified and have my private pilot's license.

Favorite experience/memories/etc. at NDSU: My favorite memory has to be when representatives from the NDSU Research and Tech Park came and sat in on a meeting. I anticipated they would introduce themselves and discuss their purpose on campus, but instead their enthusiasm inspired our group. Both representatives went back and forth, discussing ways to help our group. Neither of them wanted to leave when the meeting was over; they wanted to stay and get started immediately. I left that meeting with a huge smile on my face that our hard work has so much potential.

The VA has recently released its COVID-19 response plan (see the [press release](#)). The [plan](#) was shared to aid the nationwide medical community. The VA has also established a [Coronavirus FAQs page](#) and is regularly posting updates on its [public health response page](#).



Chase Tozer

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." – John F. Kennedy

CALL TO ACTION: **CONNECT**

The necessary social isolation that has been imposed to address COVID-19 leaves a lot of folks who are living alone, living in senior housing, or living in care facilities alone and lonely. There are many veterans living in this situation. This is a call to action to connect with veterans who are alone and isolated.

The need for social isolation will continue for weeks, if not longer. The cruel irony with this virus is that older veterans, the ones most likely to be in these living situations, are among the most vulnerable based on their age. This vulnerability forces family members and friends to keep their distance to avoid spreading the virus.



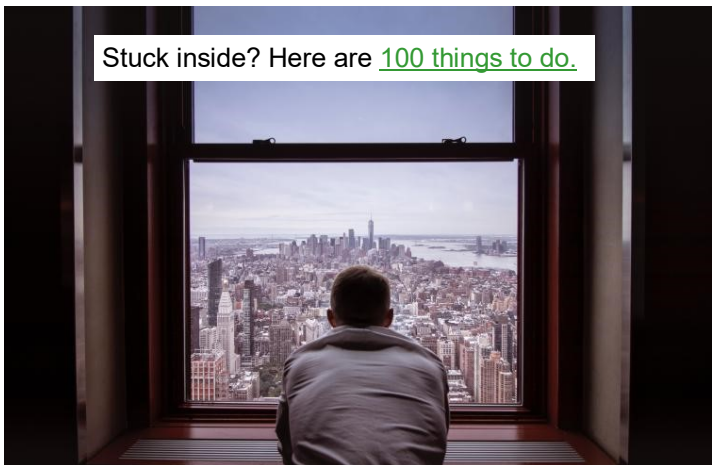
We can all do something to connect with the veterans in our lives and community. Call, text, email, web chat, engage on social media, send a video, etc. - take a few minutes out of your day to make someone else's day. You may not recognize how much it matters, but it absolutely does matter. Emotional health has an impact on physical health. Think about it, you can contribute to others' health and well-being just by making the time to connect with them. What are you waiting for? **CONNECT.**



valor.veteran.alliance.organization/

Dates	Meetings and Events
April 1	Cass VSO VA Outreach, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, Fargo
April 3	Rice (NDSU) Pups/Trans/
April 11	Force AM ad
April 22	Free Walk-in Legal Clinic (for low-income veterans) 1:00-4:00 PM, Fargo VA HCS, Room 1C86
April 26 & 27	North Dakota and Minnesota Honor Flight https://www.veteranshonorflightofndmn.org/

CANCELLED



This page of the newsletter typically features dates of meetings and events. Unfortunately, shelter-in place recommendations and orders have resulted in many cancellations and postponements of face-to-face gatherings. We encourage you to interact on social media with friends and colleagues until we can gather again.

VALOR was initially created and supported by student veterans at NDSU. Three of those student veterans currently hold seats on VALOR's Advisory Board and continue to serve the veteran community. Meet Calie Lindseth, Tom Webb, and Shelby Moen.



Calie Lindseth
 B.S. in Political Science 2014
 B.S. in Psychology 2014
 Master of Public Health 2016
 North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Women's Veterans Coordinator



Tom Webb
 B.S. in Emergency Management 2014
 Master of Public Health 2016
 Veteran Service Officer with the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs



Shelby Moen
 B.S. in Political Science 2015
 National Service Officer with the Disabled American Veterans

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- VALOR
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What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains and is immortal.
 ~Albert Pine