



Boozman Bulletin: Honoring Veterans



Honoring our veterans is one of the greatest privileges I have as a U.S. Senator. On Veterans Day, we pause to honor the selfless sacrifice of the men and women who wore our nation's uniform and renew our obligation to care for these brave individuals. They've given their best and deserve our best in return. That's why we continually work to [improve veteran services and benefits](#). How we take care of and support veterans is a mark of our nation's character. We have a responsibility to advocate on their behalf and ensure they have access to the benefits and services they have earned. I'm proud to honor their service and sacrifice by supporting legislation, shaping policies and expanding services that help veterans and their families.

To all of our veterans, thank you and may God bless you, your families and the United States of America.

Watch my [video tribute](#) to veterans.

Boosting VA Suicide Prevention Tools

We routinely make improvements to policies to make the lives of veterans and their families better. With input from Veteran Service Organizations and Arkansas veterans

sharing their experiences with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs and benefits, we continue to look at new measures and implement innovative programs to resolve existing flaws.

That's what we're doing to address one of our greatest challenges—reducing and preventing veteran suicides. We've spent a decade making significant investments in suicide prevention programs within the VA system, but unfortunately that hasn't changed the number of veterans who take their own life. For this reason, Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) and I [advocated for a new approach](#) and introduced legislation to create a VA grant program to empower veteran-serving non-profits and other community networks to expand their successful programs and reach veterans who aren't using VA services. Last month, President Trump signed into law the *Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act*, which includes this new plan.

[In this column](#) for Military Times, we explain why we're optimistic that allowing the VA to partner with and leverage the work of local veteran-serving non-profits will bring hope to veterans and ultimately save lives.

Salute to Veterans



In the latest edition of my 'Salute to Veterans' series honoring the service and sacrifice of Arkansans who served in uniform, we highlight the service of Harrison WWII veteran Perry Harness who fought at the Battle of the Bulge. After weeks of intense fighting in the cold and snowy battlefield, Harness was shot in the knee. Despite being under enemy fire and having limited immediate medical attention, he was able to find help and get transported off the frontline for treatment. He earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his service.

Mr. Harness [shared his memories about his military service](#) for the Veterans History Project, an initiative of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center to collect and retain the oral histories of our nation's veterans. This year, we are [celebrating 20 years](#) of saving the stories of survival and heroism.

As we celebrate Veterans Day, I'm pleased to acknowledge the ongoing enthusiasm for

the [Veterans History Project](#) and encourage more people to join this initiative. Memorializing the unique experiences of veterans is a great way to honor their service.

Fort Smith VA Clinic Groundbreaking



Arkansas is home to 16 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) that make an important difference in giving veterans access to VA health care much closer to home. There are 800 of these clinics in the VA system nationwide, providing outpatient services, including health and wellness visits. One such clinic in Arkansas, the Fort Smith CBOC, has outgrown its space over its 20 years of service. In late October, veterans and community leaders celebrated the groundbreaking for a new, expanded and modernized clinic. This new facility will allow the VA to better meet veterans in Sebastian, Crawford and Franklin Counties. This clinic is a symbol of our nation's continued commitment to providing timely, quality care to our veterans.

Celebrate Virtually



It's disappointing we aren't able to recognize veterans in our traditional ceremonies and celebrations this year, but it doesn't prevent any of us from finding meaningful ways to safely honor the sacrifice and heroism of those who have been called to serve our nation in uniform. Across Arkansas and nationwide, communities and organizations are implementing opportunities to celebrate these brave men and women with [virtual events](#).

Stay up to date with what I'm doing for Arkansas veterans via social media. You can find me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



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