

## In this issue

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## Richard VanNatta Elected Department Commander

Please join us in celebrating Richard VanNatta's election as the Commander of the AMVETS Department of Illinois! Commander VanNatta has been an AMVETS Department of Illinois member for 10 years. Learn more about him in his own words.

"I'm Richard VanNatta, born and raised in Avon, Illinois. I graduated school there. I have three sisters, and lost one to cancer almost a year ago. My mom just passed away in March, and my dad has been gone 27 years.

I joined the Air Force on the delayed enlistment program during the middle of my senior year, and went to basic training 2 weeks after I graduated high school. From there, I reported to Cannon AFB in New Mexico. I did some TDY's and ended up in Alaska at Eielson AFB. I'm a Vietnam "Era" Veteran. I spent 4.5 years in the service.

After I got out of service, I attended Carl Sandburg College, where I received Associates of Arts degree in Business Administration. While there I was in the Business Club and played club soccer. I was in Who's Who in American Colleges. I went to WIU for one year. I started working at McGrew Feedlot Equip, and stayed there for over 30 years, working on feeding equipment and silage tools.

I come from a long line of military men. My dad was a Korean Veteran, and he did a tour in Alaska also. His older brother is a WWII Veteran, spending time in Northern Italy. Their younger brother served during peacetime. My nephew spent time in the National Guard during Hurricane Katrina and trained to go to Iraq. He was in a Transportation Company. I

had other uncles serve in the military as well. Like others, it took a while to for me to join a Veterans group. I joined AMVETS, and the next year was

Provost Marshal in the post. From there I worked my way to commander of the post. I started attending District meetings and served as junior vice, senior vice and commander in District III. Then I ran for Department Provost Marshal and then Senior Vice Commander. Last year I served as your 1st Vice Commander of Membership. This year, I was elected as your Department Commander, and I feel very humbled by it.

I know we have been losing a post or two the last few years. I hope we can work to stem the tide and help the posts stay around. We had one new post started last year, and I believe we can work to get more new posts started in Illinois. We need to work on retaining the membership numbers, and focus on recruiting new members. We all have to work at this. We also need to find a way to get more attendance at the district meetings. The Green Hats are very welcome to attend, as your input is very much needed. **YOU DO HAVE A VOICE!**

We have very good programs; let's



make them stronger and improve some others. We do this so we can help more Veterans. I want to visit all the state-run nursing homes to show we do care about them and will help them.

"I've done a couple of parades and to thank Post 145 and town of Lamolille for their hospitality. We presented Post Charter to Post 98 congrats to them. I thank you for your service. As we talk to other Veterans, thank them for their service and welcome them home!" •

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT No. 174  
PEORIA, IL

AMVETS State Headquarters  
2200 South 6th Street  
Springfield, IL 62703

## Richard Shea, Jr. S/V Commander - Membership

Dear AMVETS,

My name is Richard Shea Jr. I am your newly elected 1st Vice Commander of Membership. I am an Army brat born in Fort Riley Kansas and raised on Chicago's south side. I enlisted in the Marine Corps in October '93, going to boot camp at MCRD San Diego and then on to Combat Engineer School at Court House Bay Camp Lejune.



For District 1, I have been Adjutant (2011), Jr. Vice Commander (2012) and District Commander (2013). For the State level I have been R. O. T. C Chairman since 2012. I am dedicated to AMVETS Department of Illinois, and showing people throughout our state what a great

organization it is.

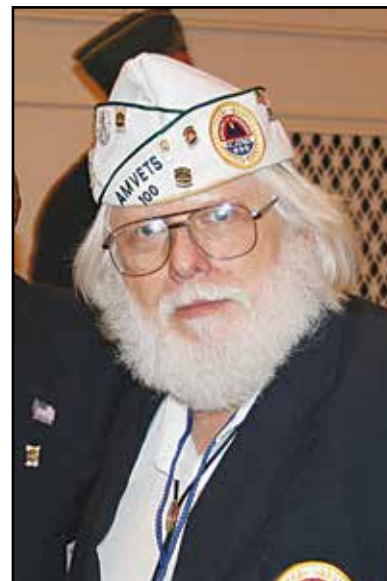
*Rich Shea, Jr.*  
S/V Commander  
Membership  
2015-2016

While home on leave before going on to my Duty Station at Camp Hanson Okinawa Japan, my father brought me to the Amvets Post that I had enjoyed as a kid (with picnics, movies in the back hall and other parties) and while there suggested I should join so in April of '94 I joined AMVETS. I received a medical discharge at the end of '94 for a knee injury. After coming home at rehabbing my knee, I took and passed a test and was hired by the Chicago Fire Department in '98. Shortly after in 2000 I married Laurie A. Shea (Past Ladies Auxiliary President of Illinois). After we had our two girls, we moved back near Post 43 and became active at the post, starting as a bartender and becoming Adjutant and the Post 43 Commander in 2010 and have been since.

## David Hicks S/V Commander - Programs

Dear AMVETS,

I joined the Navy right after high school in 1978. I served until 1985, when I got out for medical reasons. I met my Wife Tammie in May 1985 right after I separated from the Navy, and we were married in October that same year.



been busy trying to get her a good start in life since. I didn't feel I should run for a higher position before now because I felt the amount of travelling might cause me to miss too much of her early years. She now enjoys going with me to Memorial Day and other observances, as well as going to the hotels when we have meetings.

I attended a business school in Jacksonville from September 1985 to March 1987, receiving a certificate in business management and accounting. After business school, I worked in a couple of low paying jobs until I decided to return to school. I started at Illinois College in Jacksonville in January of 1990 and received my BA in History in May of 1995.

Yours in Service

*David Hicks*  
S/V Commander  
Programs  
2015-2016

I joined the AMVETS in 1983 while I was still in college, and was elected to office the following year. I have served in all positions except trustee at the post, and I have been through the District III chairs three times. I served as Department Provost Marshall and Vice Commander of Districts III, IV, and V. I have also held the Son's of AMVETS Coordinator for few years.

My wife and I adopted our daughter Aerycka at birth in 2009, and have

### Contact Us

**Headquarters Staff:**  
Executive Director  
**Jim King**

Deputy Executive Director  
**Keith Wetherell**

Membership Director  
**Jessica Sleek**

Programs Director  
**Crystal Blakeman**

Communications Director  
**Ashley Murphy**

**Service Department:**  
National AMVETS Illinois Office

Located at the Chicago VA  
Regional Office  
**312.980.4256**

NSO: **Richard Miller**

NSO: **Jose Garcia**

Accredited VSO: **Connie Deleonardis**

#### Illinois Office Locations

**Acting Deputy Service Director:**  
**George Sebastian**  
**Bob Michel Peoria CBOC**  
**217.494.1454**

**Harold Dukala**  
**Captain Lovell FHCC**  
**847.688.1900 ext. 84138**

**Ronique Heard**  
**Danville VAMC**  
**217.554.4838**

**Ed Humphrey**  
**VAMC Marion**  
**618.997.5311 ext. 54743**

**Joel Valera**  
**Hines VA Hospital**  
**708.202.2564**

**Auburn Gresham Clinic**  
**773.651.7459**

# 2015-2016 Elected & Appointed Officers

## Department Officers 2015-2016

Commander Richard VanNatta (8)	District IV Commander Jessie Owens (14)	Inspector General Rudy Spaulding (52)
Sr. Vice Commander Membership Rich Shea, Jr. (43)	District IV Sr/V Scott Lucas (52)	Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans Brandon Nell (169)
Sr. Vice Commander Programs Dave Hicks (100)	District IV Jr/V Richard Lenchner (14)	Korean Veterans Ed Wright (100)
Judge Advocate Ben Flerlage (101)	District V Commander Art Holloway (148)	Legislative Director Keith Wetherell (94)
Finance Officer Raleigh Showens (269)	District V Sr/V Neely Reed (4)	Persian Gulf Veterans Harlin Neal (98)
N.E.C. William Buckner (66)	District V Jr/V VACANT	Personnel Ed Wright (100)
Alternate N.E.C. Cheryl Weglewski (113)	Chaplain James Johnson (94)	POW/MIA Bob Steubinger (103)
Executive Director James King (4)	<b>Commander's Appointments 2015-2016</b>	Provost Marshal Darrell Tucker (14)
Past Commander Christopher Studebaker (115)	Americanism James Mosby (202)	ROTC Cheryl Weglewski (113)
Provost Marshal Darrell Tucker (14)	AMVETS Riders Bob Dant (169)	Sons of AMVETS Dave Hicks (100)
District I Commander Jerry Thomas (247)	Blood Donor Harlow Pues (32)	Special Olympics Charlie Sedevic (245)
District I Sr/V Robert Przbylinski (18)	CVA Delegates Jerry Thomas Lawrence Green (247)	State Fair - Springfield Jessie Owens (14)
District I Jr/V William Luna (326)	CVA Alternates Raleigh Showens (269) Bill Buckner (66)	VAVS Tony Altieri (66)
District II Commander Bob Steubinger (103)	Commander's Advisory Bob Dant (169)	Veterans Day John Haines (61)
District II Sr/V Harlow Pues (32)	Community Service Abundio Zaragoza (326)	Vietnam Veterans John Sisler (169)
District II Jr/V Dennis McFadden (245)	Constitution & By-Laws Ben Flerlage (101)	Women Veterans Terry Hintz (169)
District III Commander Jimmy Duncan (100)	Convention Mike Dawson (103)	WWII Veterans Bob Przyblinski (18)
District III Sr/V James Miller (104)	Family Readiness Jimmy Duncan (100)	
District III Jr/V Teresa Pickle (104)	Honors & Awards Cheryl Weglewski (113)	

## Upcoming Events Mark Your Calendars

### District V Meeting

8/2/2015  
1:00 PM  
Post 4, 102 S. 17th St.  
Mt. Vernon, IL

### Veterans Day at the Illinois State Fair

8/16/15  
Illinois State Fairgrounds  
Springfield, IL

### AMVETS National Convention

8/16/15 - 8/22/15  
Sheraton Birmingham Hotel,  
Birmingham, AL

### District IV Meeting

8/30/15  
12:00 PM  
Post 52, 301 E. Division St.  
Fisher, IL

### School of Instruction

9/18/15 - 9/19/15  
Abraham Lincoln Hotel  
700, East Adams St.  
Springfield, IL

### Have an event coming up?

Submit your event to Ashley at  
ashley@ilamvets.org to get it on  
the calendar!

# 2015-2016 Scholarship Winners



**Alana Bader**  
Service Foundation & Ladies Auxiliary



**Elizabeth Bradbury**  
Service Foundation



**Chloe Callahan**  
Service Foundation



**Danielle Dayton**  
Service Foundation



**Jeremy Green**  
Service Foundation



**Anjae Holder**  
Service Foundation



**Bryan Lee**  
Service Foundation



**Darian Mulholland**  
Service Foundation



**Makelle Rowe**  
Service Foundation



**Shay Sullivan**  
Service Foundation



**Dylan Zippay**  
Service Foundation



**Sophia Haynes-McNair**  
ROTC

# Best of luck in your future endeavors.



**Karlie Lading**  
Sad Sacks



**Anna Maria Niezgoda**  
Sad Sacks



**Kaley Flanagan**  
Ladies Auxiliary



**Ruthann Gorrell**  
Ladies Auxiliary



**Makenzie Williams**  
Ladies Auxiliary



**Cheryl Williams**  
Ladies Auxiliary

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for choosing me to receive the Illinois AMVETS Service Foundation Scholarship. I had a great time at the luncheon, and I enjoyed speaking with other scholarship winners. It was also exciting to meet the Governor and so many political leaders. This scholarship will enable me to attend American University and study politics, policy, and law. Thank you for choosing me as this scholarship recipient.

you made my day!

Sincerely,  
Sham Sullivan

Dear AMVETS,

Thank you very much for awarding me a Service Foundation Scholarship! I am deeply honored to have been chosen. Your scholarship will truly make a difference in my education. Thank you for your service to our country and God Bless!

Sincerely,  
Alana Bader

**Complete Service Foundation  
Scholarship Winners Listing**

**District I**

Jada Brown  
Paige Cosgrove  
Robert Ester  
Seneca Johnson  
Donald Rapier

**District II**

Danielle Dayton  
Alexander Guiteras  
Bryan Lee  
Nicholas Ramberg  
Peter Saucedo

**District III**

Alana Bader  
Jeremy Green  
Jourdain Lane  
Makelle Rowe  
Dylan Zippay

**District IV**

Elizabeth Brandbury  
Sophia Haynes-NcNair  
Anjae Holder  
Hailey Rumbles  
Shay Sullivan

**District V**

Brooklyn Beckham  
Chloe Callahan  
Darian Mulholland  
Marcus Root  
Marissa Thomas

# 2015 Convention Pictures



**Governor Bruce Rauner and Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Erica Jeffries presented Commander Chris Studebaker (left) and Ladies Auxiliary President Laurie Shea (right) with a certificate of appreciation from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.**



**Left: Post 100's Lewis Camerer and Jimmy Duncan attended the Convention, and learned valuable information.**

**Right: Governor Rauner spoke with Pekin Community High School JROTC Color Guard.**



**AMVETS Post 30 Ottawa Color Guard**



**PDC Chris Studebaker passing the Commandership to newly elected Richard VanNatta.**



**Pekin Community High School JROTC Color Guard**

# 2015 Convention Banquet



Honors & Awards were presented at the banquet, held on Saturday, June 6th. Here are some of the winners in attendance.

**Top:**  
Darrel Tucker was presented with the Outstanding AMVET of the Year honor.

**Center:**  
PDC Bob Dant and PDP Debra Dant, along with Commander Studebaker, presented Post 100's Edward Wright with the Americanism Award.

**Bottom left:**  
Commander Studebaker presented Bob Steubinger of Post 103 with the AMVETS Membership Award.

**Bottom right:**  
Frank Bierlotzer of Post 90 accepts the AMVETS Membership Award.



# Honors & Awards

## Winners

### Americanism Award

Post 100

### AMVETS Membership Award

Frank Bierlotzer                      Robert Steubinger  
Post 90                                      Post 103

### Outstanding Firm Recognition

Midwest Seeding Supply

### Scouting Award Post 66

Post 90

### Community Service Award

Post 100

### Post AMVET of the Year

Neely Reed, Post 4  
Al Bower, Post 8  
Ollie Capra, Post 13  
Art Batson, Post 14  
Jessie Owens, Post 14  
Richard Hyland, Post 18  
Harold Olsen, Post 26  
Marjorie Hudkins, Post 30  
Duwayne Pople, Post 32  
Alan Cooper, Post 34  
Glen O'Sullivan, Post 35  
Ray Price, Jr. Post 43  
Don Butler, Post 61  
Craig Sabey, Post 64  
Ken Neilson, Post 66  
Brian Hayhurst, Post 67  
George Pempek, Post 94  
Harlin Neal, Post 98  
Jimmy Duncan, Post 100  
Gerald G. Martinson, Post 103  
Tony Just, Post 107  
Robert Wing, Sr., Post 115  
Bradley W. Huffman, Dr., Post 140  
Randy A. Ratajczyk, Post 148  
Bryan Couler, Post 169  
Frank Krumwiede, Post 202  
Brian Winfield, Post 204  
James Gosnell, Post 235  
Gary Verdung, Post 245  
Jerry Thomas, Post 247  
Donald Stage, Post 269  
James Wall, Post 270  
Jim Sommers, Post 276  
Ronald Bautierra, Post 326

## Illinois AMVETS Department Headquarters welcomes back Crystal Blakeman and Ashley Murphy

Dear AMVETS,

It is great to be back as the Programs Director! I previously held this position from 2007-2012. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. Over the past three years I have worked with an international technology company and state government. I have been responsible for streamlining and improving corporate processes. I managed numerous contracts, database management, vendor recruitment, and monitor expenses. My educational background includes a bachelor's degree in business; with minors in business and speech communications, and some postgraduate work in nonprofit.



As the Programs Director, I would like to grow volunteerism and create new opportunities. It is my goal to participate with key staff and AMVETS members in building strategies to create and implement opportunities for veterans and their families while educating the public of their needs. I am very excited to work with each of you. I hope I get an opportunity to meet you at the upcoming School of Instruction. I have included the below information regarding the School. I hope to see you there!

The Annual School of Instruction will be held September 18-19, 2015, at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel. Two members from each post will receive hotel accommodations, mileage, and per diem to attend. We do encourage new members to attend as well as additional members from each post. Discounted hotel rates are available. Please contact your Post Commander if you would like to attend.

The School of Instruction will consist of State Headquarters' staff providing classes on AMVETS information such as programs, public relations, membership and veterans' services. Following the School, a picnic will take place at the State Headquarters. This is a great way to meet other AMVETS members and to learn more about Illinois AMVETS. Please complete a downloadable registration found on our website [www.ilamvets.org](http://www.ilamvets.org). Learn more on the opposite page.

Best regards,

*Crystal Blakeman*  
Programs Director

Hello AMVETS!

I am so happy to be back at the Illinois AMVETS. I was previously the Public Relations Director (now called the Communications Director) for eight years, from 2005-2013. I feel proud of my time with Illinois AMVETS, and grateful for the opportunity to once again help our veterans.



For the last few years, I've been working in the social services field, for a statewide non-profit that helps to prevent child abuse. I have a M.A. in Communications, and a B.A. in English and Journalism.

I am excited to once again take the reins for the Illinois AMVETS newspaper. I truly believe our newspaper is an excellent tool to promote our organization, both to our own members and to the public. Please submit pictures, news stories and any ideas you have for the Illinois AMVETS' newspaper. It is always such a pleasure to hear about what you are doing! The deadline for submitting newspaper articles and pictures is the 10th of each month.

I am available to help you and your post publicize the good works you are doing, and let the people of Illinois know that the AMVETS are here and are an organization of Veterans Serving Veterans. If you have an upcoming event at your post, please send the information my way so I can get it on our website and our social media pages.

I want to thank you for your service to our country, and for your continued service to veterans and their families. It takes a special person to be a volunteer!

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns via email at [Ashley@ilamvets.org](mailto:Ashley@ilamvets.org), or by phone at 217-528-4713.

Best regards,

*Ashley Murphy*  
Communications Director

## Jessica Sleek takes over as Membership Director

*Editor's Note: In the May 2015 edition, you were introduced to Jessica Sleek. She has since transitioned from Programs Director to Membership Director. Learn more below.*

Greetings AMVETS,

I am pleased to announce that I will be acting as the new Membership Director. As I did enjoy my short period of time as Programs Director, I do believe that I will fit well on the membership side of this wonderful organization. I do ask that we work together to make this transition run smoothly. With that being said, I would like to request that when sending new membership please make sure that you have all the information which is required. It is imperative that we have the dates of entering and discharge from service. Also please include the branch of service and an accurate mailing address. Thank you very much and I look forward to serving you as the Membership Director.

Feel free to contact me via email at [jessica@ilamvets.org](mailto:jessica@ilamvets.org), or by phone at 217-528-4713.

Best regards,

*Jessica Sleek*  
Membership Director





# Diabetes Basics

Why do some people have high blood glucose?

Glucose comes from the food we eat. Foods that have carbohydrates are broken down into glucose. This glucose is used for energy. Glucose in the blood is carried to all the cells of the body. However, in order for blood glucose to enter the cell, a special helper and glucose are needed. The helper that glucose needs to enter the cell is insulin. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas. Cell receptors are like doorways into a cell. A cell can have many receptors.

To imagine how glucose, insulin, and cell receptors work, think of your car. To park in your garage, you need a garage door and a garage door opener. Glucose is like your car, the cell receptor is like the garage door, and the insulin is like the opener.

If your body does not make enough insulin or if it does not work properly, glucose cannot get into your cells. Instead, glucose stays in your blood causing high blood glucose, or hyperglycemia. People with hyperglycemia have diabetes.

In Type 1 diabetes there is no insulin, so glucose does not get into the cell. This person needs to take insulin.

Symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes Include:

- Weight loss
- Thirst (polydipsia)
- Extreme hunger (polyphagia)
- Excessive urination (polyuria)
- Weakness or tiredness

In Type 2 diabetes the insulin does not work well. Some glucose gets in the cell, but some does not. This person may or may not need to take insulin.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. People can develop Type 2 diabetes at any age. With Type 2 diabetes, the receptors on the cells become resistant to insulin's action. Sometimes a person does not make enough insulin. This also is Type 2 diabetes. Being overweight and inactive increases the risk for Type 2 diabetes. Not everyone who is obese or over-

weight will develop diabetes. Genetics, diet, and physical activity all play an important role in how well insulin and glucose interact.

Symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes Include:

- Frequent urination (polyuria)
- Thirst (polydipsia)
- Blurred vision
- Weight gain, weight loss or no change
- Being tired
- Many people have no noticeable symptoms

Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy. When a woman becomes pregnant, there are many hormonal changes. These changes, especially in the later stages of pregnancy, can affect the mother's sensitivity to insulin. Doctors often check women's blood glucose levels during their pregnancy. High blood glucose levels can cause complications during the pregnancy or after the baby is born.

How much you eat can affect your weight. If you have diabetes how much you eat could affect your blood glucose level. This is because weight gain can lead to higher blood glucose levels for those with diabetes.

If calories in = calories out, you don't gain or lose weight. You stay in balance. Calories in will be greater than calories out if you eat a lot and do little activity. This leads to weight gain. Weight gain is a risk factor for diabetes. You can stay in a healthy balance if you pay attention to calories in and calories out.

Talk to your health care provider or dietitian about your meal plan and how many calories you should choose. For the basics of portion control, visit [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov).



**Dr. Karen Chapman-Novakofski**  
University of Illinois at  
Urbana-Champaign

## School of Instruction

**The School of Instruction consists of Illinois AMVETS staff providing classes on AMVETS information such as programs, public relations, membership and veterans' services.**

Two members from each post will receive hotel accommodations, mileage, and per diem to attend. We do encourage new members to attend as well as additional members from each post. Discounted hotel rates are available. Please contact your Post Commander if you would like to attend.

**WHEN:**  
September 18-19, 2015

**WHERE:**  
President Abraham  
Lincoln Hotel  
701 E. Adams St.  
Springfield, Illinois

**HOW:**  
Please complete a downloadable registration found on our website [www.ilamvets.org](http://www.ilamvets.org). All reservations are made for arrival on Friday, September 18th and departing Sunday, September 20th.

**Don't forget the picnic Saturday night at the Illinois AMVETS Headquarters!**

Good food, good friends & good fun!



# Veterans' Day

Illinois State Fairgrounds • Springfield, Illinois  
 Sunday, August 16, 2015 • Lincoln Stage

Please join the State of Illinois and the State Fair on this special day honoring the men and women who have courageously served our Nations' Armed Forces.

## At the Lincoln Stage

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. **Helping Our Hometown Heroes Benefits Fair**

10:30 - 11:30 a.m. **Memorial Service**

11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. **Special Musical Performance**

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. **Official Program**

1:00 p.m. **Lunch served**  
*(Pulled Pork & Marinated Chicken Breast)*  
*(Free to Veterans and Immediate Family)*

1 - 3:00 p.m. **Musical Entertainment**

3:30 p.m. **Parade Line Up**  
*(Gate 3 near the Fire Station)*

4:00 p.m. **Parade Begins**



## Illinois AMVETS Needs Your Support.

They were willing to give all for you. What are you willing to give to them?

*Support the Illinois AMVETS with a donation, and help us provide the assistance our veterans and their families need & deserve.*

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

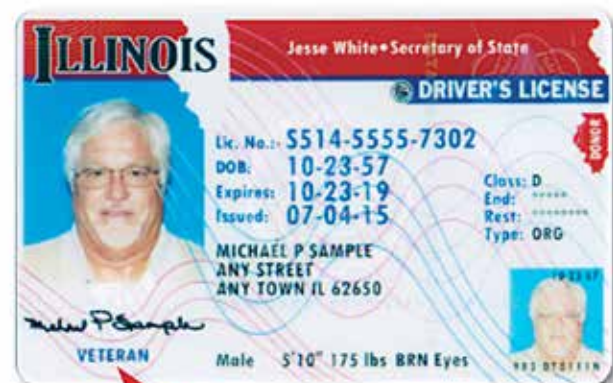
## New Veterans' ID Now Available in Illinois

The State of Illinois is offering a new option for veterans to access veteran services by adding a veteran designation to their identification. The purpose stated in the legislation was to assist the veteran in accessing services and benefits to which they are legally entitled, including healthcare, education assistance, and job placement. This designation can serve as verification of service for discounts at businesses for veterans that are not utilizing the VA Healthcare facilities as well. The new public act lays out the details on acquiring one and is effective July 1, 2015. If interested, veterans must visit their nearest IDVA Veteran Service Officer and get their DD-214 certified. Then the veteran may apply for a new, renewal or updated driver's license or ID card at any Secretary of State Driver Service's facility. There is no additional cost for first-time driver's license applicants and renewals, but if veterans chooses to update there is a \$5 fee.

**"I am pleased to offer this service to our military Veterans who have given so much of themselves for the greater good of this nation," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "There is no greater honor than serving your country, and our veterans can now proudly display their service on their driver's license or ID card, which will help them receive the services and benefits they richly deserve."**

Submitted by:

*Ronique Heard*  
 Illinois AMVETS VSO  
 Danville



For more information visit:

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/97/097-0739.htm>

# Meet your new Ladies Auxiliary

## President: Larina Sanders

Greetings AMVETS  
Ladies Auxiliary,

My name is Larina Sanders and I am proud to be your newly elected AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Department of Illinois State President.

I joined AMVETS Auxiliary #67 Beecher in 1997 as a life member when PNP Denise LaBatt was National President. In 2009 I became a Department officer as Sergeant-at-Arms for three years. I also served as Ways & Means Chairman, 3rd Vice President, 2nd Vice President and 1st Vice President. Prior to that I served as Scholarship Chairman and later as Treasurer of the now disbanded Division/District IV. At the local level, I am currently 2nd Vice President and Scholarship Chairperson. Previously I served as Hospital Chairperson.

While I am originally from Beecher, I now live in Crete. I am a certified Special Education Teacher; however, currently I work at Target and substitute teacher for the Peotone School District. I come from an AM-VET family, my father is Past Department Commander Lawrence Sanders, and my mother is Past Department President, Ruthann Sanders. I have one brother, Larry Jr. who is married to Sherry they have 3 children and 2 granddaughters. Two of my uncles are also life members of AMVET Post #67.

My theme this year is: Helping Children Discover their Unlimited Potential. Children are our future; they are valuable asset to society. To become a more successful adult they need all the help they can get to reach their ultimate potential.

My project is: Camp Corral. Camp Corral is a free, week long summer camp for military children, age 8-15, with priority given to children of



wounded, disabled, or fallen military service members. They provide a fun and developmental experience where kids are free to be kids apart from the day to day challenges they face within their military families. Camp Corral's mission is to "Serve those who have served us."

Campers participate in traditional camp experiences like horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, and other outdoor activities. While there, they are learning new skills, building character, and making new friends.

Being elected Illinois AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Department President is an honor. I will do my very best to uphold the high standard of this position.

Yours in AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Service,

*Larina Sanders*

President  
AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary  
Department of Illinois  
2015-2016

## Department Officers 2015-2016



President Larina Sanders (67)	NEC Woman/ Liaison Pam Lukemire (3)
1st Vice President Claudia Kelly (204)	Americanism Donna Guerrero (35)
2nd Vice President Mary Kerby (3)	Hospital Bev Hopper (51)
3rd Vice President/ IVH-Anna Delegate Shirlie Holmes (33)	Scholarship Dixie Kalips (204)
Treasurer/ IVH - Quincy Delegate Debra Dant (169)	Illiana Health Care System VAVS Rep Mary Ann Leger (3)
Chaplain Loretta Malecki (34)	IVH - Manteno Delegate Patricia Burdick (67)
Sgt-At-Arms Rose Caffrey (204)	Hines VA Hospital Rep Margaret Greene (13)
Honors & Awards Laurie Shea (43)	James A. Lovell VAMC Rep Christine Skrzpek (169)
Parliamentarian Ruthann Sanders (67)	Marion VAMC Rep Kathleen McMurrin (4)
Convention Chairman Ann Phelps (4)	



**Governor Rauner attended the June Convention in Springfield, and took time to speak with PDP Ruthann Sanders (left) and President Larina Sanders (right).**

# Farewells from 2014-2015

Note from the editor: The June and July 2015 editions of the Illinois AMVETS were not published. We want to make sure that you are able to read the final submissions from our 2014-2015 AMVETS Department of Illinois Commander and Ladies Auxiliary President. These were submitted prior to Convention, so they make mention of the Convention that has already occurred.

## Past Department Commander Christopher Studebaker

Dear AMVETS,

It is hard to believe another year in AMVETS is coming to an end and with that my time as your Department Commander. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your Department Commander. You have opened your post homes and welcomed me in with open arms and showed me all of the wonderful things you as AMVETS do for the veterans and your communities.

I have traveled up and down this state numerous times to many events, picnics, post and district meetings, making speeches, and talking to politicians and the media about the various issues involving veterans and the care they receive.

I hope to see everyone at state convention this year in Springfield on June 5th-7th. This is where we as AMVETS will be electing the new state officers to guide us for the next year and voting on constitution and bylaw changes. We will be holding elections for the new state officers on Sunday this year so that way more AMVETS that have to work during the week will have the opportunity to come to convention and take part in the decision making.



Once again I want to thank you for all of your hard work this past year in AMVETS and lets not forget about the troops that are still in harms way defending our freedom. God bless you and the United States of America.

Yours in Service

*Chris Studebaker*  
Past Department Commander  
2014-2015

## Past Department President Laurie Shea

Dear Ladies Auxiliary Members,

Well our convention is here and my time as president is coming to an end. I would like to thank everyone for all your support and encouragement during my term as president, I have enjoyed every moment. Serving as your President has been hard work but also more fun than I ever expected. It's been an amazing opportunity to go to luncheons, parades, dinners and special ceremonies, but I have to say the one thing that kept me on my toes were all the speeches and oral reports I was asked to deliver. I apologize for the times I stumbled on my words or forgot a few things. At times when I was standing in a full of people staring back at me my nerves got the best of me.

Fulfilling all of the duties of the Ladies Auxiliary President is definitely a full time commitment and in addition to this, I am a full time mom. This posed some challenges at times, but my families support made it all possible. Being your President showed me that if I put my heart into something I can accomplish anything with the help of family and friends. This year of experiences was all worth it and I wouldn't have changed it for the world.

I would like to express appreciation and gratitude for supporting my project, The Smith Residences Veterans Village. The Smith Residences Veterans Village will provide transitional and permanent housing for women veterans and their families whose livelihood has been adversely and severely impacted due to homelessness, loss of employment, marital status, PTSD, or abuse. This village will provide rental assistance and extensive support services to the veterans and their families via



partnerships with fellow service organizations such as counseling and career services. I chose this project because I believe that no matter what, every veteran deserves the right to a comfortable life when they return home. Many of our Nation's heroes, both men and women, face hardship upon returning to civilian life and I believe that we should do whatever we can to help ease their transition through whatever means needed.

To everyone that invited me to attend their events I would like to say thank you, I had a great time at each of them. It was so inspiring to see people working together on projects to support our veterans and our communities. The end of my term as President doesn't mean the end of my involvement in Auxiliary events and projects. Please don't hesitate to invite me back I plan to continue contributing to our mission for many years.

To all my officers, thank you for all your hard work and support throughout the year. Without you, I don't think this term would have run as smoothly as it did. This just proves that anything can get done with a little team work. To our incoming president I would like to say, congratulations, I hope you have a successful year. Please feel free to reach out to me if you need any help.

Thank you again for all your support I will never forget this year and remember as long as we work together our veterans and their families will always have a safe place to come home to in time of need or just to have a friend.

Thank you

*Laurie Shea*  
Past Department President, 2014-2015

