BLOUNT COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS

BUDGET REQUEST  2017/2018

Veterans: 11,829
Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Monetary Awards $41,986,000.00

Message from the Director

In 2016, we welcomed 7,332 Veterans and dependents to our office. We answered 9,492 phone calls. As an office we welcomed 635 Veterans that had never visited our office before. The VSO made 93 home visits and 13 nursing home/hospital visits.

The VSO attended 47 Veterans Organization meetings which were after working hours in 2016 driving 6,589 miles.

Finally, our office remained accredited with the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs, American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Blount County Veterans Affairs Staff

- Director Nathan Weinbaum
- Assistant Director/VSO Donna Hatcher
- Assistant VSO Marek Vyskocil

The Blount County Veterans Affairs Office proudly serves 11,829 Veterans in our County.

Calendar year 2016 was exceptionally successful for our Veterans and dependents.

Glen Dison received Purple Heart Medal in 2016.

Vietnam Veteran receives Purple Heart Medal after 48 Years!

On May 18th, 2016, US Army Vietnam Veteran, Glen Dison, officially received his Purple Heart Medal after being wounded in action more than 48 years earlier.

Dison, who is 69 years old, visited the Blount County Veterans Affairs office to request assistance in obtaining proof of his Purple Heart Medal. Although severely wounded in action and being presented a Purple Heart Medal on a hospital ship, Glen’s medal never made it to his DD-214. After the service, he was never able to prove his wounds were from the enemy. Documentation was found and our office put in the application for the Purple Heart Medal.

Glen Dison entered the US Army in 1967 and served in the infantry with 17th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry Division in Vietnam. He was wounded in action in June, 1968.

Glen Dison was officially presented with his Purple Heart Medal by Brig. Gen Mark Hart of the Tennessee National Guard on May 18, 2016.

Vietnam Veteran, Sam Russell, is the AMVETS Transportation Van Coordinator and American Legion Cdr.
War Dead Memorial Restored

The Blount County War Dead Memorial was restored in 2016 with an official dedication on November 11, 2016. A committee was formed and over $240,000 was raised. RedChair Architects, Hickory Construction and Maryville Monument completed the work on the restored memorial. The Memorial has almost 400 names listed of local service members Killed In Action.

Food Pantry Continues to Benefit Veterans in Need

In 2016, the Blount County Veterans Affairs Food Pantry continued to help our local Veterans in need.

The Food Pantry was established in 2014 as the only County Veterans Affairs Office Food Pantry in the state of Tennessee.

The pantry helps Veterans in need who may not have resources for food or may be in a situation where they have to choose to eat or pay an electric bill.

Blount Veterans interviewed for Oral History Project

In 2016, 19 Blount County Veterans were interviewed for the Blount County Veterans Oral History Project.

The Blount County Veterans Affairs Office interviewed ten WWII Veterans, one Korean War Veteran, seven Vietnam Veterans and one Peacetime Veteran.

The interviews are uploaded and posted on the Blount County Government Veterans Affairs webpage.

The interviews capture the stories of memories for each Veteran interviewed.

The Blount County Veterans affairs office will continue the Blount County Veterans Oral History Project in 2017!
Five Veterans Received High School Diplomas in 2016!

The Blount County Veterans Affairs Office helped assist five local Veterans in obtaining their Honorary High School Diploma in 2016.

It was an honor to help each of these deserving Veterans obtain their diploma’s after their High School education was interrupted for War Time Military Service. (Left to Right) Jerry Potter (Vietnam War), Thomas Cummings (WWII), Leonard Turner (Vietnam War) & Carson Hicks (Korean War), and Charles Veal (WWII) all met the requirements to obtain their Honorary High School Diploma’s!

More than 1,000 Veterans received Walking Sticks in 2016!

Blount County Vietnam Veteran, Steve Newman, along with Master Woodcarver, Gene Webb, have donated more than 1,000 walking sticks and canes to our Blount County Veterans.

The beautiful walking sticks and canes are located at the Blount County Veterans Affairs office and are given to Veterans when they visit the office. The walking sticks and canes are labeled by branch of service.

American Legion Post 13 retires American Flags!

Every July 4th, American Legion Post 13 holds an annual membership drive and Flag Retirement Ceremony. When the United States Flag becomes worn, torn, faded, or soiled, it is time to replace it with a new flag. The old flag should be retired with dignity and respect.

Over 100 American Flags are retired each year. A luncheon follows in celebration of the July 4th holiday.
Sgt. Michael Ferschke, Jr. Bronze Bust Dedicated at Library

The Sgt. Michael H. Ferschke, Jr. Bronze Bust was unveiled in a dedication ceremony at the Blount County Public Library on August 13, 2016.

Ferschke was a graduate of Maryville High School who served our nation in the USMC. He was a proud and brave recon Marine. Sadly, he was killed in action on August 10, 2008 in Iraq. Operation Never Forget approached the Ferschke family after his death about a bronze bust being sculpted in his image.