

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN VETERANS

March > February > March 2025

## Winter's/Spring 1st Quarter Newsletter

**The National Association of American Veterans (NAAV) Inc.**, says hello to our New Year 2025.

Fading from winter to spring with glistening sunrises and peaks of warmer temperatures brings joy.”

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### *What's new:*

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- *Veteran's News*
- *Veteran Resources*
- *NAAV by the numbers*
- *New Year Glistening*



[https://media.istockphoto.com/id/1161472701/photo/snowflakes-on-an-abstract-shiny-light-background.jpg?s=612x612&w=0&k=20&c=U\\_HfICODPLxuP7fA\\_I\\_aN-V52f3hjfwmmhKCtMEwRcs=](https://media.istockphoto.com/id/1161472701/photo/snowflakes-on-an-abstract-shiny-light-background.jpg?s=612x612&w=0&k=20&c=U_HfICODPLxuP7fA_I_aN-V52f3hjfwmmhKCtMEwRcs=)

The fact that one year ends and new year begins can be like taking clothes from the washer to the dryer. Once wet and cold, tossed to and froe is carried, as fast as it stops, into a waiting cycle of warm tumbles, freshened up to be worn like new.

NAAV seizes every opportunity to start over again and welcomes you to this 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter bounce.



## VOLUME I

...Falling leaves all around.  
Falling leaves on the ground. Just like we might fall, we can get back up and turn our life around.

The ground isn't the end of a thing. Rather, hitting the ground is a brace; a stop gap; a spring to step, not to quit, but as a pause — regroup and transition to the next thing.

Something to ponder as Mary did that day the Angel Gabriel came to visit and told her, “do not be afraid, you shall bear a child (son), while a virgin. She has found favor with God.” {Luke 1:26-38}

Something to ponder:

What happens to a leaf that falls to the ground— have you ever wondered? It doesn't necessarily die, but instead, “bounces back for a new and hopeful purpose”

Mary replied: “...be it unto me according to thy word. {Luke 1:38 – KJV}

There are several definitions and meaning attributed to the word “glistening.” For example:

- to shine by reflecting light from a wet or smooth surface “Cambridge Dictionary”
- to shine brightly “Cambridge Dictionary”
- shining with a sparkling light, “Oxford Dictionary”
- to give off a sparkling or lustrous reflection of or as if of a moist or polished surface, “Merriam-Webster Dictionary”

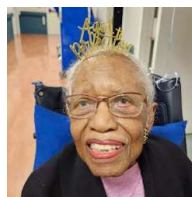
The term “glistening” when considering its many synonym forms of action basically means “to send forth light.” Glistening is the result of reflecting from or bouncing off of a wet or oily surface. “Merriam-Webster - (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/glisten#:~:text=Some%20common%20synonyms%20of%20glistening%20wet%20sidewalk>) . NAAV in this illustration is the fluid substance that is used to reflect the light in the lives of our American veterans their family members and caregivers. We are here this 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter to start you off with a small attribute, of our organization, paired with a source, with you as the reflection, we can produce in the life, heart, and soul, of others.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Newsletter hopes to shed light on the power of caring and giving. 2025, we welcome your ability to peak through and shine forth as a glistening spark of what can be when all the right ingredients are combined together. Let’s start out by spreading some good news.

### VETERAN NEWS~

Last year we celebrated the birthday of a 104- year- old queen, Major Nancy Lieutenant-Colon, U.S. Army/Air Force Nurse Corps (Ret). This year, we mourn her loss.

In Memoriam: Major Lieutenant-Colon passed away in January 2025, a few months after celebrating her 104<sup>th</sup> birthday.



- Testimonial from Nancy and her family in Amityville, New York:



- "Thank You, **National Association of American Veterans, Inc. (NAAV)** for sending me my beautiful birthday flowers. Thank you for your continued support and professional assistance to me and my beloved family members over the past ten years." - **Nancy Lieutenant-Colon, Major, U.S. Air Force Nurse Corps (Retired), Amityville, NY**

## VETERAN NEWS

HAPPY 104TH BIRTHDAY TO MAJOR NANCY LEFTENANT-COLON, U.S.  
ARMY/AIR FORCE NURSE CORPS (RET).

The First African American Nurse – **Nancy Leftenant-Colon, Major (Retired)** was the first African American nurse to serve in the reserve or active-duty Army/Air Nurse Corps, the precursor of the Air Force. She joined the Army Reserves in 1945, unable to get into the regular Army Nurse Corps because she was an African American. The **only** woman to become the first president of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. from 1989-1991. Along with selected members of the Tuskegee Airmen, she received the **Congressional Gold Medal** from President George W. Bush on March 29, 2007.

- Army Cuts Credentialing Funds For Soldiers As Demand Surges.
- Free virtual initial claims at the VA clinic for



DEAR NAAV,

Thank You  
The light of your love has brightene  
our hearts in this difficult time.  
Thank you for caring, for praying,  
for being there with us.  
With deepest gratitude from the  
Family of Nancy Leftenant-Colon



## Terror suspects' military connections highlight mental health among veterans – ABC11 Raleigh-Durham

Posted on [January 6, 2025](#) --[Read News Release Here](#)

This entry was posted in [Military Family](#), [News and Events](#), [TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AND MENTAL HEALTH](#), [Veteran News](#), [What's New](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

"RALEIGH, N.C. (WTVD) -- After the [truck attack on Bourbon Street](#) in New Orleans, followed by the CyberTrust, it is not believed that the two incidents are related. But the fact that both suspects served in the military has local veterans groups concerned.

The group said it shines a light on what's becoming a growing mental health crisis.

"It's so frustrating every time I hear of a veteran taking their own lives, a veteran taking other people's lives, it's just devastating to me," said Deb Elek.

After a career in the Marines, Elek founded 22 Saves Hockey in Rolesville, named for a sobering statistic - the fact that an estimated 22 veterans are lost to suicide every day. The group works to prevent that by getting them involved in sports like hockey.

It hits close to home, Elek lost a sister to suicide. Her son, also a veteran, suffered from PTSD. She even noticed changes within herself."

[Building Your VA Claim for Success](#) Posted on [April 8, 2025](#)

The process of submitting a VA compensation claim has led many Veterans to believe they need to pay thousands of dollars for their claim to be successful. However, filing a claim does not require costly fees. When the VA reviews your claim, the evidence of record must show your claimed disability is related to military [...] Posted in [Military Family](#), [Organization News](#), [Resources](#), [Veteran News](#), [Veterans Benefits](#), and [What's New](#).

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## A SOURCE FOR WOMEN ~

[Million Veteran Program](#) Posted on [April 9, 2025](#)

MVP's goal is to improve the future of health care for all Veterans, across age, race, sex, service branch, and era. With more than one million Veteran participants, MVP is the largest research program at the Department of Veterans Affairs and the world's largest and most diverse research program within a health care system. With [...] Posted in [A Source for Women Veterans](#), [Organization News](#), [TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AND MENTAL HEALTH](#), [Uncategorized](#), [Veteran News](#), [What's New](#)

[The Benefits of Craft-Based Hobbies for Boosting Veteran Wellbeing](#) Posted on [April 8, 2025](#)

Image source: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-holding-wooden-stick-while-drilling-hole-1094767/>  
Craft-based hobbies can be fun. They can also help to boost wellbeing. Creative hands-on activities can benefit veterans by improving mental health, reducing stress, and fostering connections with others. Each craft brings unique rewards, offering relaxation, focus, or emotional expression. [...] Posted in [A Source for Women Veterans](#), [Military Family](#), [Resources](#), [TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AND MENTAL HEALTH](#), [Veteran News](#), [What's New](#)

[The Road to Recovery: Legal and Medical Resources for Veterans Injured in a Car Accident](#) Posted on [February 20, 2025](#)

The Road to Recovery: Legal and Medical Resources for Veterans Injured in a Car Accident If you're a veteran who's been in a car accident, you've already got enough on your plate. The last thing you need is a confusing mess of paperwork, medical bills, and insurance companies making you jump through hoops. You might [...] Posted in [A Source for Women Veterans](#), [Military Family](#), [Organization News](#), [Resources](#), [Veteran News](#), and [What's New](#).



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The **National Association of American Veterans, Inc. (NAAV)** was established in 2005 and incorporated in 2006 to provide programs and services for those who served and are serving in the U.S. Armed Forces worldwide most in need of emergency assistance with transportation, shelter, rent, mortgage, and utilities bills to name a few.

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**NAAV by the numbers:**

*As with every year and every season, your generous monthly financial support is most needed to continue NAAV Community Outreach to those who served and are serving in the U.S. Armed Forces with emergency assistance and words of encouragement 24/7. To donate, please visit [www.naavets.org](http://www.naavets.org).*

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- **300 calls for emergency assistance in the first three months of 2025.**

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*NAAV's CFC number is 85065, "Caring About Those Who Served." Thank you in advance for your continued support and professional assistance.*

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National Association of American Veterans (NAAV)  
We assist service members and disabled veterans, assist with veterans benefits, provide VA assistance and emergency veteran assistance. Disability claims.  
[www.naavets.org](http://www.naavets.org)

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**GLISTENING with hope**

**Mental Health: "A VETERAN SHARES HER STORY OF OVERCOMING THROUGH PERSERVERANCE"**



*\*Marine Sgt. Elizabeth A. Chumbley, Sgt. U.S. Marine Corps (2001-2011) of Gainesville, Florida*





“I’m a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, who served 10 years with three deployments to Iraq during OIF. I suffer from PTSD which makes me 100% service connected through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. I have struggled most of my entire life, but because I had such an amazing support system as I was growing up, this is what made me who I am today. What I’ve gone through is more than anybody should ever have to endure.

It all started with just having an abusive father and then watching my mom having to survive the suffering he endured on me, my mom, and my brother. My mom eventually remarried but my stepdad also had his own demons. He may not have been physically abusive but at times he was very verbally abusive to me and my mom when he drank alcohol. I loved him like a father, but it wasn’t until 2008 when he took his own life in front of me and my mom when I was on break from my second tour of Iraq.

I struggled going through school and trying to understand why I was such an outcast and different from everyone else. My stepdad had three of his own sons, which gave me four brothers in total. Being the only girl surrounded by men made me the athletic child that I am. Going into the U.S. Marine Corps was for me to just explore new things and try to figure out who I was.



I learned so much from the military and it had made me the stronger and better person I am, but it too had its flaws. I was sexually assaulted after my first tour of Iraq by a friend. That set the precedent for the rest of my military career. My trauma from that only got worse. I was demoted a year later for something else that I got in trouble for, but it never stopped me from pushing forward to getting the ranking and leadership positions I wanted. All I could think about is how I could help the Marines and fight for a better country.

During my third tour of Iraq, my dad passed away and I did not go home. I chose to stay and fight with my Marines since we still had a mission at hand that we had to take care of. After I got out of the military in 2011, I went back to stay with my mom, and I only got to spend a year and a half with her until she eventually passed away. Along with that, my grandfather passed away as well, an Army Vietnam veteran with a purple heart. I looked up to that man and losing him broke my heart as well.

After losing my mom I literally thought I had crumbled and that was my rock bottom. Just a few minutes prior to my mom’s passing, I was in an auto accident that had set the precedent for all the car accidents I will be in in the future and the pain I still suffer to this day. It took the VA two years to finally do surgery on my neck after my cervical spine was curving the opposite way.

It is now 2025 and I am just getting physical therapy from that surgery in 2015. The VA back in Colorado where I’m from, has been a nightmare on how they treated me and my mental health. They rather have locked me up and drugged me up instead of truly helping me and seeing how my mental being needed to change as opposed to bearing it with pills. I ended up getting my associate’s degree in photography, because I wanted to be a combat photographer when I was in the military but chose to do something different on the outside. By finishing that degree, it has allowed me to go to school for sports medicine.

Since 2018, I have done a 180 in my mental health. I have been to four inpatient hospitals for my mental health, seeking CPT and DBT therapy. That was just the steppingstone towards my recovery. Just attending school I’ve learned that pills were never the answer. I had to fight my own mental health by changing my speech, my thought patterns, the way I



expose myself to certain things in my life and the people that surrounded me. I am a better person for now advocating for myself and striving to be a better person every day and making sure I do the right thing for myself.



I'm still not 100% and I don't think I ever will be, but I've learned to accept myself and learn to love myself for who I am. My own family back in Colorado wants nothing to do with me after my mom's passing. I was homeless for 2 years and nobody would even acknowledge me. I moved to Florida in 2023, and I still have problems with a mental health clinic at the VA. They've blamed me for being who I am. They said I'm the problem and nobody else is. Yes, I beg to differ, I offered solutions and all they wanted to do is continue to drug me up and force me to be a counselor that didn't even speak to me or help me in any way shape or form. July of 2024 I finally bought

my first house here in Florida and I've never felt so much peace and quiet in a long time.

I still struggle with my mental health because of my driving. Being a truck driver in the military I have learned so much, but it did not carry into the civilian world. I have been in over 20 plus car accidents since I was discharged. A lot of them used to be my fault but as I've recovered, I've noticed it's starting to be everyone else now. I feel the hardest part in mental health is trying to stay true when everything around you is so dark.



My strength is the example of someone who has survived through the worst over and over again. Yet I'm still coming out on top and other ways. I am so blessed to see how far I've come and where I will be in the future. I am the warrior that wants to save this world, and I just want to share my story and let others know you're not alone.

I may not be religious, but I trust myself enough to know what is going to help me survive and live free in my mind and spirit.”

-Submitted to NAAV by Elizabeth Ann Chumbley, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran (Retired), Gainesville, Florida - 3/27/2025

### Testimonial **Highlight:**

#### ➡ Finding NAAV: Her Testimony:

*“First and foremost, I want to give a huge shout out to Constance Burns, Founder, President, and CEO of Veterans Service Organization/Veterans Advocate with the National Association of American Veterans, Inc. This woman has helped with a snap of her fingers, whereas other veteran resources or assistance has taken months to years to even get around to acknowledging my struggles. She is my hero for taking the time to care and listen to me and what I am going through. She helped me by paying my late payment for my mortgage that fell behind due to financial struggles. Not only did she help me with my home, but she is also helping me with reaching out to find Mental health services outside the VA since the VA has dropped the ball on my health and blamed me for my problems. I'm the type of person who would give everything away to help someone else not suffer, but here I was, not getting the same help in return. Constance, I don't know what I would have done without you and your amazing heart and spirit. Because I was helped, I can now take this positive energy and help others as she has done for me.”*





*Since this is my first home and you helped me keep it, I can now sleep at night knowing tomorrow will be a better day, not only for me but also for my pets. Thank you for loving us!"*



Elizabeth, Lil Jimi, and Mia



Visit NAAV website at [www.naavets.org](http://www.naavets.org) for more 2025 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter testimonies:

.... A small reminder: Central Union Mission



Living and giving made simple

When schedules fall out of balance and clutter fills your life, here are five ways you can practice living lighter:

1. **FULLY SURRENDER.** Quieting your life to hear God's voice helps you make wise decisions.
2. **STREAMLINE SCHEDULES.** Every time you say "yes" to something, you're saying "no" to something else. This clarifies what (and who) deserves the gift of your time.
3. **SPEND WISELY.** Change how you view your finances and give out of what God has given you.

Every \$3.21 provides TWO meals!  
**DOUBLE your impact and make a local difference this Christmas season**



Thank you for allowing us to shine the light on previews to come for the remainder of 2025. We trust the glistening shimmers of light, and hope stir your will to pray, support and give to those who have given so much. Join NAAV's mission on behalf of veterans and their family members as we move along in this new year—season after season.

Kindest regards,

Constance A. Burns  
 Founder, President, and CEO  
 Veterans Service Officer  
 Chair, Board of Directors  
 NAAV, Inc.  
 Washington, DC

