



# HOOSIER VETERAN

IDVA Newsletter

July 2025

## New State Laws Go Into Effect July 1

By Cody Browning



We are thrilled to announce two significant legislative developments impacting the Indiana Veteran Community. First, Senate Enrolled Act 433 (SEA 433), focuses on elevating the standards for County, City, and State Veteran Service Officers. This act mandates the Indiana Veterans' Affairs Commission establish accreditation standards for service officers, which include essential initial training, continuous education, key performance indicators, and annual reaccreditation. The new accreditation standards will ensure service officers are equipped to deliver consistent, high-quality customer service to veterans throughout the state. Moreover, the Commission will have the ability to revoke accreditation if standards are not met, ensuring accountability and professionalism.

Second, House Enrolled Act 1637 (HEA 1637), expands eligibility for state benefits by revising discharge status criteria. Previously limited to those with an Honorable discharge, this act opens benefits to veterans with other discharge types, except those disqualified due to specific conditions such as receiving a dishonorable discharge or criminal offenses as detailed in Indiana Code 10-17-12-7.5(2).

Furthermore, HEA 1637 expands the reach of the IDVA Grants for Veterans' Services (GVS) to support veterans, their dependents, and primary caregivers. GVS addresses pressing issues such as homelessness, housing stability, therapy, job training, and accessing state and federal resources. The act also expands admission criteria to the Indiana Veterans' Home, adds the United States Space Force to the definition of Armed Forces throughout the Indiana Code, and establishes the Medal of Honor license plate.

These legislative advancements emphasize Indiana's dedication to honoring and supporting veterans and their families. IDVA remains committed to its mission to Support, Serve, and Advocate for the Indiana Veteran Community. With the passage of SEA 433 and HEA 1637, we continue to strive towards our vision of making Indiana the state where Veterans Live, Work, and Thrive.



Welcome to the July edition of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs newsletter. The newsletter is one way IDVA is committed to veterans and the veteran community. We also have a transparency portal on our website identifying economic trends and showcasing agency data that reflects where our efforts are being used to drive more veterans to more benefits and services. [in.gov/dva/](https://in.gov/dva/)

Jake Adams

Director,  
Indiana Department of  
Veterans Affairs  
Supporting, serving, and  
advocating for the  
Indiana veteran  
community.

# Deserving Marine Elected as Commandant

## **An Interview with Indiana Marine Corps League Leader, Kay Ross**

By Laura McKee

IDVA: What is the Marine Corps League and what is its purpose?

Kay: It is a congressionally chartered, non-profit veterans' organization founded in 1923 to preserve traditions of the United States Marine Corps. It represents the interests of Marines, veterans, and national security before Congress.

IDVA: Why did you join and how long have you been a member?

Kay: I was approached by two Marine veterans at a gas station in 2006. They were both members of the league and convinced me to give it a chance and go to the monthly meeting just to "check it out and see what it's really about." I went to the meeting that evening and have been a member ever since.

IDVA: Why did you join the Marine Corps?

Kay: When I was eight years old, I remember telling my dad that I was going to be a Marine just like him. I didn't even know what "being a Marine" actually meant, but I loved hearing his stories about when he served. I also wanted to see the world and get out of the small country farm town I grew up in. When I was a senior in high school, I met with a local recruiter and decided that I still wanted to be a Marine, so I signed up. I thought the worst thing that could happen was I would get money to pay for college when I got out. That was definitely a very naïve view from an 18-year-old!

IDVA: What are your priorities during your term?

Kay: Member retention. The league, like many other veteran organizations, is having difficulty attracting new members, especially the young

See [MARINE COMMANDANT](#) page 8



Left: Kay Ross being sworn in along with her 2025-2026 elected officers.

# IDVA Partner Spotlight

This Indiana Veteran Community consists of veterans, family members, caregivers, friends, organizations, and providers that touch veteran lives in some way. IDVA salutes the organizations, agencies, and foundations that deliver resources, benefits, and hope. Check out our Partner Feature, follow the links, learn about them and help us support them.

## NAMI Indiana: IDVA's Grants for Veterans' Services Supports Veteran Mental Health

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Indiana stands committed to its mission of providing free mental health support, education, and advocacy for Hoosiers with a particular focus on veterans who face unique barriers when seeking care. These barriers can include cultural stigma, limited access to culturally competent mental health providers, and distrust of the healthcare system.

NAMI Indiana is empowered by the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) Grants for Veterans' Services (GVS) program to address these specific needs. The GVS program provides vital financial support to non-profit organizations dedicated to serving Indiana's veteran community. The GVS funding supports NAMI Indiana with programs like NAMI Homefront, a free, 6-session educational program designed for families and caregivers of military service members and veterans with mental health conditions. This program provides valuable information and support on topics like PTSD, combat stress, and the recovery process.

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs plays a crucial role in supporting veteran mental health in Indiana. One in 5 veterans from recent conflicts experience mental health challenges and NAMI Indiana's veteran specific programs help bridge the gap for veterans. The GVS program allows NAMI Indiana to focus on reducing veteran suicide, a key IDVA priority.

To learn more about the GVS program and how it supports non-profits like NAMI Indiana, please visit <https://www.in.gov/dva/>



NAMI Indiana Help Line: 800-950-6264  
(M-F, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. ET)  
[namindiana.org](http://namindiana.org)



# Your Voice, Your Story

We invite you to share your story with IDVA and each other!

Let us know about your experience with our team.

Post your personal stories and experiences that have shaped your lives while in service, as a veteran, or as a family member.

Your narratives can serve as a guiding light, encouraging fellow veterans to open up and share their own meaningful journeys.

Each story has the potential to foster connection and understanding within our community.



Tell us your  
**Story**

## ***A Veteran, the Military Family Relief Fund, and COVID***

*Thank you for your story, Robert!*

One thing the military taught me was to always have a backup plan. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, I was an IT contractor at a major company in Carmel, with an \$80,000 income. After a month of working from home, my contract was terminated, leaving me to face unemployment, along with the shared uncertainty of those times. Unlike many, I was lucky. I had no dependents, few expenses, and had a few months of emergency funds tucked away.

By midsummer of 2020, that savings had begun to dry up, forcing me to consider my retirement accounts to pay my living expenses. Luckily, I found the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF).

MFRF offers Hoosier veterans a one-time grant of \$2500 to help them navigate emergency financial situations. The grant can be given in whole or can be portioned out based on need. To qualify, you must meet the eligibility criteria outlined on their website.

Receiving an MFRF grant allowed me to supplement my unemployment payments for four months, maintaining my living expenses, without damaging my credit or paying interest on early retirement withdrawals. In that time, I was able to focus on learning new skills for my career, emotionally support my family, and work with recruiters to find the right role.

Sometimes, even the most prepared find themselves in crisis and need a little help. Luckily, Indiana's dedication to its veterans through the work of IDVA and programs like MFRF means that Hoosier veterans don't stand alone.

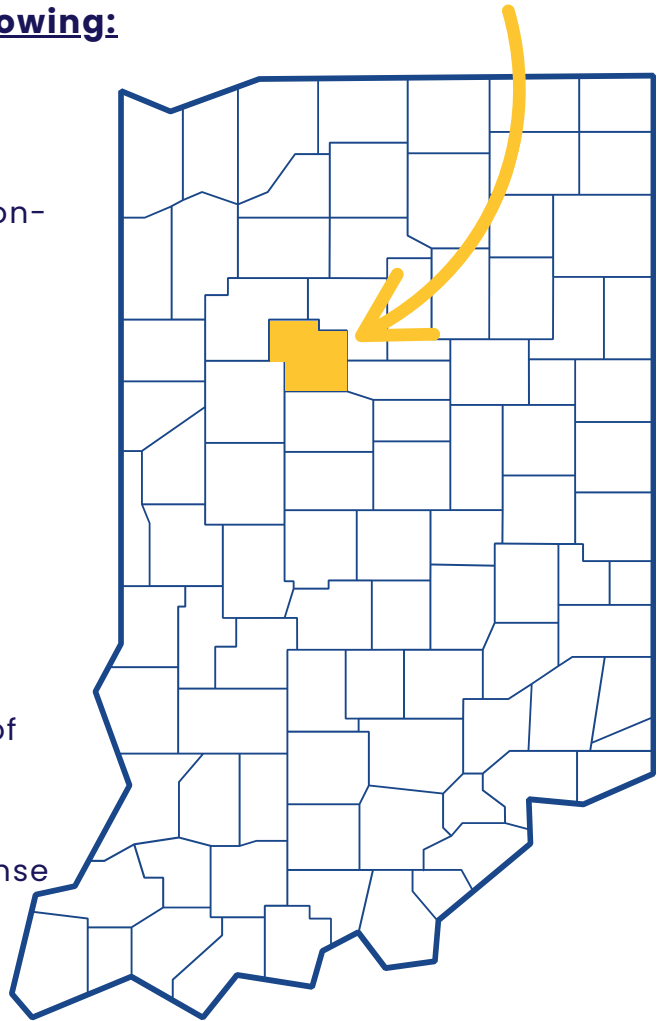


# County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) Spotlight

## Carroll County

### **Your CVSO offers assistance in the following:**

- Obtaining your DD-214
- Discharge Review
- Filing claims for service connected or non-service connected disabilities
- Education benefits
- Low Income Wartime Pension Benefits
- Survivor Benefits
- VA Medical Care
- VA Home Loans
- G.I. Bill Benefits
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Burial Benefits
- Property Tax Abatement
- Tuition and Fee Exemption for Children of Disabled Veterans
- Motor Vehicle License Plates
- Resident Veteran Hunting & Fishing License



## **CONTACT CARROLL COUNTY**

### **Larry Leach**

County Courthouse

101 W. Main Street, ste 103

Delphi, IN 46923

[veterans@carrollcountyin.gov](mailto:veterans@carrollcountyin.gov)

Clerk: Anita Hartman

### **MON TUE & THU**

8:00 AM-12:00 PM and 1:00 PM-5:00 PM

**WED:** 8:00-Noon

### **FRI: By Appointment**

Office: (765) 564-2502

FAX: (765) 564-1858



[Find Your CVSO](#)



# Veteran Affairs News & Notes

## Benefits and Healthcare

The Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Veteran Healthcare Administration (VHA) services and benefits offer comprehensive support tailored to the unique needs of those who served in the military. Utilizing the benefits and services supports long-term well-being. Services and benefits include:

- Healthcare Access
- Disability Compensation
- Education and Training
- Home Loan Guarantees
- Mental Health Support
- Job Assistance
- Pension Benefits
- Survivor Benefits

Supreme Court Rules for More than 9000 Combat Disabled Veterans

[READ MORE](#)



VA Research & Development Findings

[READ MORE](#)

New research on brain-computer interfaces, suicide and hypertension



VA RESEARCH WRAP UP

Historic All Women Veteran Honor Flight

[WATCH](#)



## Check out the VA Podcast Network

The VA Podcasts Network offers a diverse selection of top-quality podcasts made with the Veteran community in mind.

Variety of Topics  
Veteran Focused

[TUNE IN](#)



# Military & Veteran Community Observances



## JULY



National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

July 4 Independence Day  
 25 National Hire A Veteran Day  
 27 National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day  
 28 National Buffalo Soldiers Day  
 30 Sinking of the USS Indianapolis, 1945



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4 ✓	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 ✓	26
27 ✓	28 ✓	29	30 ✓	31		



IDVA Calendar of Events

[IDVA Calendar of Events](#)



Do YOU have an event you want to share?

[Submit Your Veteran Event](#)



## MARINE COMMANDANT

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generation. I also want to make sure that every member feels welcome, valued and supported. If we treat our members like this, it will build strong relationships and friendships which will keep our league strong. One way is to have all the new Marines and associate members stand up at the beginning of our annual state meetings and introduce themselves. I want all the members to see who they are so they can seek them out during events and meetings and make them feel welcome. I know what it is like to attend a conference alone and not feel welcome or included. I don't want anyone to feel like that. (It was more difficult as I was one of two female Marines attending at that time).

**IDVA: What are your priorities during your term?**

I am going to encourage more of our female Marines to join our ranks to include the department level. I want them to see there are Marines who are supportive. They may not have felt that during their active-duty time, but they need to know those Marines are out there. I will be putting more emphasis on our veteran outreach, working with local communities, and mentoring our youth in areas through the Young Marine program and the ROTC program.

I will keep this phrase "One team, One Mission" at the forefront of whatever the department does. The phrase encapsulates the Marine Corps League's core values and objective. It is a call to action for all members to unite in their dedication to shared principles. We are a team, and we will complete our missions together.

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs would also like to congratulate KAY ROSS as the most recent recipient of the Sheila Corcoran Hoosier Women Hero Award. This award recognizes exemplary Hoosier veteran women committed to the betterment of their community. Veterans are in good hands!

Pictured left to right:

Heather Harvey, U.S. House of Representatives-  
District Office of Congressman Andre Carson  
Mike Stephens, Indianapolis Regional Office  
Director

Kay Ross, Homeless Veteran Outreach Coordinator  
Tamieka Graves, Veterans Service Center Manager





**Stay connected!  
Join our IDVA text  
system today!**

**Text IDVA to  
79848**

**You will only receive  
messages curated just  
for you!**



317.232.3910



outreach@dva.in.gov



in.gov/dva