**2017 Annual Review Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council**

October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018

**Date Council Began**: November 29, 2012

**Clinic Information:**

The Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council (Council) is located at 4812 Asheville Highway, Knoxville Tennessee in a region metropolitan area of approximately 1,250,000.

## The William C. Tallent VA Outpatient Clinic (KOPC) serves Knoxville Tennessee and 8 surrounding counties.  Serving a vast veteran population of 88,000, this outpatient clinic is extensive in services.  The parent medical facility is Mountain Home VA Healthcare System, Mountain Home TN, which is about 110 miles away. Many of the surrounding wester counties, however, are served by the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System - Alvin C. York (Murfreesboro) Campus. The Council’s service area includes both which is 17 counties with a veteran population of 250,000. The counties include: Anderson, Blount, Bradley, Campbell, Grainger, Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, Marshall, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Polk, Roane, Sevier and Washington. The main office changed on September 30, 2018 from 4812 Asheville Highway, Knoxville Tennessee to 437 Murphy Road, Maryville, Tennessee 37801. The council still maintains its rural office in Madisonville, Tennessee thanks to the generosity of the Taylor Thomas family.

**Council Mission Statement**:

The mission of the Council is to partner with veterans who receive mental health services and their families, the VA Mental Health professionals, Veterans service organizations and other community support systems to enhance the quality of lives of this vulnerable population. This partnership fosters the bi-directional flow of information and services to develop methods of measuring Veteran's satisfaction and to advocate for changes that contribute to positive influence on the veteran or the veteran’s family. One of the most important goals of the council is to improve the communication and understanding between Veterans and the MH staff to reduce the stigma associated with seeking and using mental health services. The Council also specializes in a plethora of specific initiatives including Veteran Suicide prevention, Veteran/Military Friendly Congregations, Veterans Courts, Veteran Recovery, Veteran Homelessness, We Honor Veterans, Repairs for Heroes, Vietnam War Commemoration, 917 Project, Celebrate Recovery, South Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal and Expungement clinics. The Council operates as a volunteer organization; thus, does not require a treasurer as no funds are collected or transferred within the council. The Council has an affiliate partnership with Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) to assist in implementation of the Council’s program. Vet to Vet Tennessee is a 501 (c) (3) organization and provides funding to assist with completing the Council’s goals.

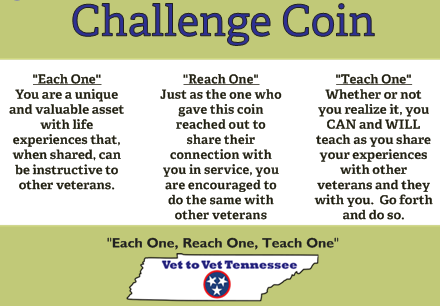
**Fiscal Year 2018 Activities and Accomplishments:**

**Accomplished 6 of the 6 KRVHMC 2018 Goals.**

1. **Opiate Abuse Education/Accidental Overdose** 
   * Completed. Mar 7, 2018 - [Opioid Safety - Veteran/Patient Education - VHA Pain Management. Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit - Safety Advice for Patients & Family Members (PDF), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.](https://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Opioid_Safety/Patient_Education.asp)
   * [September 17, 2018 VA OIG Review of Pain Management Services in Veterans Health Administration Facilities.](https://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Opioid_Safety/Patient_Education.asp)
2. **Women Veterans’ Outreach and Service Recognition**
   * Completed. The Council formed a Women Veterans Committee following the passing the Council’s Co-chairman Freddie J. Owens on April 17, 2018. Emily Hager was selected as Chairwoman and Cindy Winterberger as Co-Chairwoman. Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett and Redemption Church Senior Pastor Ed King agreed to support the new committee. The committee formed the inaugural Freddie J. Owens Women Veterans 2018 Summit, which was held on October 4, 2018 at Redemption Church, Knoxville Tennessee. This campaign was successful, setting a foundation for future summits.
3. **VA Chaplain Services in KOPC and rural communities**
   * Completed. Telehealth 24-hour VA chaplains’ accessibility available. VA created and posted new Chaplain services brochures. VAMC Mountain Home Chief of Chaplain Services collaborated with VTVT’s Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation (VMFC) Concord United Methodist Church to schedule the 1st “Warriors to Soul Mate” class in Knoxville. Pastor Larry Trotter agreed to future classes at Concord. Facility and support were provided by Concord at no cost to the VA.
4. **Expungement Clinic** 
   * Completed. The 1st Expungement clinic in the 10th Tennessee Judicial District on April 21, 2018 in Madisonville Tennessee. VTVT partnered with University of Tennessee College of Law Professor Joy Radice et al, the Knoxville Bar Association, 10th Judicial District Judge Sandra Donahey, Monroe County General Sessions & Veterans Court Judge Dwaine Thomas and First Baptist Church of Madisonville Pastor Chris Moore to execute the district’s 1st expungement clinic.
5. **Increase Veteran Specific Suicide Prevention/Intervention outreach/education**
   * Completed. VTVT submitted a Veteran Specific Suicide Prevention proposal to Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee in March 2018. The proposal’s mission was to train 10 instructors via evidence-based Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) method. Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett was the first to approve funding for VTVT to train QPR Gatekeeper instructors in April 2018.
6. **Blount County 50th Annual Veterans Day event**
   * Completed. November 10, 2018. Blount County Veterans Council, Blount County, Rio Revolution Church, Blount Memorial Hospital, Maryville College, and Vet to Vet Tennessee conducted the 50th Annual Veterans Day event. Special guest speaker was Ellison “Vic” Vickery, retired Special Forces Army Colonel with 5 purple hearts Colonel Vic’s wife provided him and other veterans with memorable response to *“thank you for your service”* which is *“You’re worth it!”*

**Other 2018 Achievements**

1. Conducted **49** Legacy Peer Support Group meetings and hosted 11 Council meetings.
2. Peer Facilitators and Veteran Court mentors provided **11,925** VA volunteer hours.
   * Number of volunteers decreased from 24 to 18.
   * Freddie J. Owens who passed away in March 2018 had 38 hours for the month of March and a total of 755 hours in FY 2018.
   * Volunteer hours were 1,000 hours less in 2018 than previous year.
3. Evidenced based Veteran Specific Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) suicide prevention summary:
   * **329** QPR Gatekeepers trained; total to date, **609** QPR Gatekeepers.
   * 66 % Males, 34% Females, 61% Veterans.
   * Percentage of surveys returned to date is 82.7% with an average grade of **9.38** out of 10.
   * Trained 17 QPR Gatekeeper Instructors with grants from Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett and Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee.
   * President of Vet to Vet Tennessee was certified as QPR Institute Master Trainer.
   * All sessions are free. Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) and the VA provide suicide prevention material and support.
4. Vietnam War Commemoration (VWC) program stats: 50 events, 9,342 attendees, 1,602 VWC Veteran recipients and 159 surviving spouses. Total to date: 28,752 attendees, 6,409 VWC recipients and 224 VWC spouse recipients.
5. Vet to Vet Tennessee, as a proud partner of the Republic of South Korean as a Korean War Ambassador For Peace Medal, receives 123 applications from five (5) countries and 33 US states; 63.3 % were eligible. VTVT disbursed over $1,000.00 for postage expenses to mail the awards.
6. 32 Veteran Advocates awarded Council/VTVT memorial awards; ten (10) George A. Thomas Memorial Awards and Twenty-Two (22) Joseph “JL” Tucker Memorial Award
7. October 7, 2016. 16 volunteers from Maryville TN AMVETS Post 22 and V2VT arrived at the “The Wall That Heals.” Volunteers were greeted and trained by Vietnam Veteran, Knox County Director Veterans & Senior Services and brother Buzz Buswell.  At the end of the tour, Don Smith, VVA Knoxville #1078 thanked the team for their participation.  Buzz and Don provided all with a memorable experience.
   * V2VT volunteers: Barry Rummell, Butch Cooper, Ed Junod, Bill Shero, Jesse Rivera, Melvin Oggs, Ron Hutson and Vern Vargo.
   * Freddie Owens has been to the exhibit.
   * Photos may be found at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/HUfUccJzL3VYt6Yt1>
8. October 12, 2017. V2VT announced their new collaborative veterans housing program with Blount County Habitat for Humanity (BHfH) and Maryville AMVETS Post 22 (Post); "Repairs for Heroes"; repairs veterans/military mind, body, spirit and home.
   * From concept to execution, the program and its 1st project took 30 days to complete!
9. October 13, 2016. Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett partners with the Council and VTVT to recognize Vietnam Veterans and their families with “Vietnam War Commemoration” Proclamation Day.
   * Department of Veterans Affairs VISN 9, VAMC Mountain Home and Knoxville Outpatient Clinic leadership participated.
   * VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator and VTVT provided a Veteran suicide prevention table.
   * Knoxville Red Cross provided refreshments.
10. October 17, 2017.  During the United Veterans of Blount County (UVBC) monthly meeting, a motion to accept Vet to Vet Tennessee as their newest Veterans Organization was approved unanimously.
    * Currently the organization's members are: American Legion Post 13 & Auxiliary, Maryville AMVETS Post 22 & Auxiliary, Disabled American Veterans Blount County Chapter 76 & Auxiliary, Military Order Purple Heart Sam Houston Chapter 1814 & Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars Blount County Post 5154 & Auxiliary, World War 1 Barracks 3074 and Veterans of Foreign Wars John J. Duncan, Sr. Memorial Post 10855.
11. October 18, 2017. The highest recognition the Council and V2VT can bestow on an individual is the Joseph "JL" Tucker Memorial Award.
    * The award was presented to former Associate Chief of Staff Mental Health Dr. Heidi Vermette by Mountain Home VAMC Facility Director Mr. Dean Borsis on behalf of the Council.
    * Dr. Vermette was the first Mountain Home VAMC liaison to the Council in November 14, 2013.  She remained in that position until September, 2017.
    * Even though the Council and the Mountain Home VAMC leadership had enormous bridges to build, Dr. Vernette remained dedicated to helping our veterans.  Her leadership and vision excelled in January, 2016 with the support from acting Facility Director Dan Snyder.
12. **October 27, 2017. Congressional Testimony:  Veteran Suicide. Dr. Craig J. Bryan's testimony to the Senate Committee of Veterans' Affairs of interest.** [Dr. Bryan's testimony](http://tnvhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Bryan_NCVS_Testimony_09.27.2017.pdf), "Of greatest relevance to the current hearing, from 2001 to 2014 the suicide rate among Veterans who do not use VA services increased by 39% from 2001 to 2014, whereas the suicide rate among VA users increased by only 9%." But most relevant is this quote**: "...only 30% of all Veterans who died by suicide were VA users, which means the considerable majority of suicides are occurring among Veterans external to the VA."**
13. October 28, 2017. The first FREE Knox County Expungement Clinic at the Beck Cultural Exchange Center provided a memorable experience for hundreds of citizens and volunteers despite the inclement weather
    * A new loving community emerged as over 500 individuals were served by over 100 volunteers. People caring and helping each other made this event appear as a miracle.
    * Each person left the clinic with joy, relief, jubilance, and gratitude; many exhibited tears of happiness.  Many individuals thanked the volunteers including a component related to life-changing
    * The Beck was packed from 8:45 am till 3:00 pm, three hours longer than scheduled; special thanks to University of Tennessee College of Law Professor Joy Radice et al, General Sessions Judge Chuck Cerny and Municipal Court Judge John Rosson Jr. and Knox County District Attorney General Charme Allen, Knoxville Bar Association who agreed to “stay until everyone in the building was served.”
14. November 3, 2017. Thanks to Vet to Vet TN President Freddie Owens, veterans in Columbia MO were recognized and remembered for their service in the Vietnam War.  On October 22, 2017 Columbia MO veterans were presented with the Vietnam War Commemoration presidential proclamation and lapel pin.
15. November 3, 2017. VA End of Year Hospital Star Rating (FY2017).
    * In 2017, 64% (94 out of 146) of VA Medical Centers showed improvements from their baseline one year earlier.  Great news!  Thank you Secretary Shulkin.
    * The **Mountain Home Medical Center** received a 4 out of 5 and is on its way to a five star under the new leadership and vision of Facility Director Dean Borsis.
    * Many of the worst VA hospitals in the country last year remain among the worst this year, according to internal rankings released on October 25, 2017 by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
16. November 8, 2017. Vet to Vet TN Recognized as a "Standout Partner" by the USA VWC.
    * The U.S.A. Vietnam War Commemoration (VWC) recognizes Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) as a standout partner for hosting 69 events thanking and honoring Vietnam veterans and their families. The recognition was published in the VWC "SITREP" monthly newsletter on November 8, 2017 in Issue 10, 2017.
    * Thanks to the numerous VTVT partners and presenters, over 10,000 individuals have been introduced and over 5,000 Vietnam War Veterans have been honored. Hundreds of spouses of Vietnam War Veterans who were either KIA, POW or died after their return from service were also recognized.
17. November 11, 2017. Veteran-centric Veterans Day becomes a huge success in Blount County.
    * Over 320 attended the 49th Blount County TN Veterans Day event. For decades the event was held at the Maryville Courthouse but the venue changed this year: the event was moved to [Rio Revolution Church](http://www.riorevolution.com/) and a new venue; making the event veteran centric which contributed to a more comfortable, veteran-focused environment.
    * Veterans Day festivities began with Vet to Vet Tennessee's President Freddie J. Owens appearing on WBIR
    * With a new vision, Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell, Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) and United Veterans of Blount County Veterans prepared this event to honor Vietnam Veterans and their families who served from November 1955 to May 1975.  Mayor Mitchell created a Blount County Proclamation for this event.  VTVT President and Ia Drang survivor Freddie J. Owens was the special guest speaker.
18. November 13, 2017. [Faith Encounter](https://www.facebook.com/faithencounter/) Pastor & SMSgt USAF NG TNANG (US) Michael “Mike” E. Williams hosted a Veterans luncheon at his church on Sunday, November 12, 2017.
    * Celebrated 2017 Veterans Day with special guest speaker Brig. General Donald L. Johnson
    * Honored US Vietnam Army Airborne Veteran James Mc Ginnis who passed away on September 19, 2017 and his surviving spouse Donna and her family.
    * Faith Encounter is a Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation and is supported by Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) who provided the Vietnam War Commemoration (VWC) presidential proclamations and VWC Certificates of Honor.
19. December 2, 2017. Veterans Day at Redemption Church was a family affair with Randy Bradley hosting.
    * Bradley greeted everyone present and spoke about remembering the service and sacrifices of others who made this day possible. He then asked the Veterans to stand and be recognized as American Heroes; the Church gave them a standing ovation.
    * Bradley recognized Pastor Ed King as Redemption Church Pastor but also a U.S. Army Vietnam War helicopter crew chief. Redemption Lay Leader, Ia Drang survivor and President of Vet to Vet Tennessee Freddie J. Owens presented the George Thomas Memorial Award to Pastor Ed.
20. December 4, 2017. Delaware Valley Veterans Home joins as the 1st Veteran/Military Friendly Organization in PA.
    * Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) announced a partnership with the Delaware Valley Veteran’s Home (DVVH) to recognize and honor Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice during World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars.
    * This announcement is an example of VTVT’s commitment to working closely with nonprofit organizations and other community partners to identify new and innovative ways to support Veterans’ health and well-being.
    * DVVH is the first Veteran/Military Friendly Organization recognized by the Military Chaplains Association of America (MCA) and VTVT.
21. December 29, 2017. Roofers from RC Roofing LLC from completed the Repairs for Heroes (RFH)  program.
    * Successful despite bitter cold temperatures.
    * US Army Korean War veteran Avery Helton and wife Mildred were very thankful for the RFH program; he was honored to be supported by his veteran brothers and sisters.
    * This is the second project this year and was made possible by the partners: Amvets Post #22 who generously provided the funding, Blount County Habitat for Humanity for providing project management and Vet to Vet Tennessee providing the RFH mentors.
    * The post provided funding the project.
22. December 30, 2017. Council publishes FY 2017 Annual Review.
    * Thanks to the support of numerous federal, state and local governmental agencies, Veteran/Military Friendly Congregations, Ministries, Universities and Organization, all six of 2017 goals were complete.  Six new goals were selected for 2018.
      + Opiate Abuse Education/Accidental Overdose
      + Women Veterans’ Outreach and Service Recognition
      + VA Chaplain Services in KOPC and rural communities
      + 2nd Expungement Clinic
      + Increase Veteran Specific Suicide Prevention/Intervention outreach/education
      + Blount County 50th Annual Veterans Day event
23. January 4, 2018. Humana and VTVT Collaborate to Prevent Veteran Suicide.
    * 2018 began with a new partnership to stop veteran suicide with Humana.  This is the second year the Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) began the new year with a new partnership to prevent and stop veteran suicide.  Last year on January 3, 2017 VTVT provided our Smoky Mountain Home/Hospice Care with VTVT's evidence-based Veteran Specific QPR suicide prevention training to all six of their offices.
    * VTVT trained Humana staff at the Knoxville TN office at the request of Air Force Veteran and Community Manager Nikki DeFillipi.  VTVT trainers were Don & Shery Davis, Freddie Owens and Ed Junod.
    * 67% of those who committed suicide did **NOT go to the VA.**
24. January 9, 2018. Veteran from Washington County TN Graduates from Veterans Court.
    * This experience was incredibly special to Washington County Navy Vietnam Veteran Thomas McGuire.
    * Tom was the first justice involved veteran to graduate from the 10th Judicial District Veterans Court which allowed Tom to be placed in the 1st Judicial District Mental Health diversion program.  Tom's charges were dismissed, and his record expunged.
    * This case involved the cooperation of the Monroe County Veterans Court Judge Thomas, Counselor John Chandler from the Helen Ross McNabb Military Services Center, and Washington County Mental Health Judge James Nidiffer, Assistant DA Tony Clark and VTVT. “Semper Fortis.”
25. January 11, 2018. New Council 2018 Council member elected and VTVT awards presented.
    * First 2018 Council meeting opened with introduction of two new Council members; Emily Hager, Navy Officer Veteran & UT PhD Candidate and Nikki DiFillipi, Air Force Veteran & Community Manager for Humana Ins.  These additions to the Council are of immense value, especially considering one of the 2018 goals is "Female Veterans Outreach & Recognition."
    * Immediately after the intro, Freddie Owens, Council Co-Chair presented Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett with the George A. Thomas Memorial Award for his continued faithful support to the Veterans of Knox County.
    * Immediately after the Mayor's remarks, Ed Junod, Council Chairman, announced two (2) VA Council Liaisons were awarded with the Joseph "JL Tucker Memorial Award:
      + VA VISN 9 Deputy Mental Health Director Robert "Rob" Campbell.VA VISN 9 Deputy Mental Health Director Robert "Rob" Campbell.  Mr. Campbell has been a dedicated Council liaison since August 2015
      + Mountain Home VAMC Assoicate Chief of Staff PACT Dr. Elizabeth Bishop was the Chief Medical Officer of KOPC when the Council was formed in November 2012.  Dr. Bishop leadership and vision helped the Council meet their goals but also has improved the KOPC facility tremendously.
26. January 29, 2018. Knoxville Chamber Economic Development Assistant Patrice Collins notifies VTVT of a University of Louisville Practicum student who is seeking an internship.
27. January 30, 2018. Statement by VA Secretary David Shulkin -- State of the Union
    * Under President Trump’s leadership, VA becomes engaged in the largest transformation and modernization effort in decades. As part of this effort, the department is tackling head-on issues that have lingered for years, including accountability, whistleblower protection, improving transparency and customer service for Veterans and**expanding suicide prevention and mental health care services.**
    * As outlined in Secretary Shulkin’s address, VA will have another groundbreaking year in expanding and improving our services for Veterans, particularly when it comes giving them more choices over their health care decisions and improving yet again on the timeliness of our decisions on Veterans’ benefits.
    * The country was moved when President Trump recognized young Preston Sharp for his dedication and leadership in planting over 40,000 flags at our nation’s cemeteries to recognize America’s heroes. Sharp inspired hundreds of volunteers across the country who are looking to expand his effort to all 50 states.
28. February 8, 2018. Navy Veteran John Merrill receives the George A. Thomas Award.
    * Air Force Council member Jesse Rivera bestowed the George Thomas Memorial award to John Merrill.  Jesse recommended John because of selfless dedication to helping others through faith and God while at All Saints Catholic Church.
    * John Merrill is a 1980 Naval academy graduate. He was the CEO of a multimillion-dollar company. More important to John then any money was his commitment to the people he did work for. He often took his children in to comfort the them in their distress.
29. February 8, 2018. Dr. Richardson receives the George Thomas & JL Tucker Memorial Awards.
    * Dr. Donald Richardson was the inspiration to the first PTSD workshop group in April 2011.  Doc brought together 23 unwilling Vietnam Veterans on Monday April 11, 2011 at the VA Knoxville Outpatient Clinic.  His workshop brought healing to the 23 but it wasn’t easy.  22 were Vietnam veterans and one, David Smith, was an Iraqi vet.
    * Because of Doc’s faith, leadership, encouragement, support and prayers the workgroup continued and is still growing; three groups were formed:  Legacy Peer Support Group (LPG), VTVT and the Council.
    * Dr. Richardson made a significant difference in George & JL’s lives and helped all of us from the depths of darkness to into life.  Dr. Richardson was bestowed both the George A. Thomas Memorial Award and the Joseph “JL” Tucker Memorial Award on February 8, 2018 by Mountain Home VA Health Care System Director Dean Borsis on behalf of the Council and VTVT.
30. February 11, 2018. Pastor Koopman teaches youth about challenge coins. New Hope Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Madisonville Tennessee is a Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation member. Youth Sermon by Pastor Dr. David Koopman
    * **Challenge Coin**
    * *“Do you know what this is?  Probably not!  It’s called a Vet to Vet Tennessee Challenge Coin and this one is offered to Veterans in Tennessee.  Now the purpose of a challenge coin is to serve as a reminder to pray for and support others, in this case other Veterans.*
    * *The Bible tells us to love and support others, to pray for them, to help them when they are in need.  Perhaps we should have some token to remind us, maybe even a challenge coin.*
    * *Let us remember that our Veterans are very special people with very special needs, needs that we can help them meet if we can rise to the challenge."*

[](http://tnvhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-04-12-4.png)[](http://tnvhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/VTVT-Challenge-Coins.jpg)

* + *The challenge coin, which many of them carry, helps to remind them and should remind us that we are all connected.  By the love of our Lord, the liberty that has long been defended by our Veterans, and the sense of belonging we all should feel.”*

1. March 8, 2018. Latest Loudon County Justice Involved Veteran Graduates.
   * Air Force justice involved veteran (JIV) appeared before Judge Hank Sledge at the Loudon County Justice Center on Wednesday March 7, 2018.
   * The Air Force JIV entered the Veterans Court program on October 5, 2017 under the supervision of Monroe Country Veterans Court Judge Dwaine Thomas.  The veteran entered the Helen Ross McNabb Military Service Center for treatment.
2. March 8, 2018. Newest JL Tucker Memorial Award Recipient.
   * Debra Cohan, the Department of Veterans Affairs Knoxville Outpatient Clinic's Suicide Prevention Coordinator, attended the regularly scheduled Council meeting on Thursday March 8, 2018 to discuss the Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee's new suicide prevention program.
   * Debbie has been a major component of the Council and VTVT's suicide prevention program since its inception four years ago.  The clinic and their veteran clients & families has received outstanding support, courage, hope and guidance from the best suicide prevention coordinators in the country for almost a decade.
   * In recognition of Debbie's service to veterans and their families helping them overcome adversity, the Council and VTVT bestowed to her the Joseph "JL" Tucker Memorial Award.
3. March 21, 2018. Army & Marine Vets Graduate from Monroe County Veterans Court
   * Army Veteran Michael Mayfield (Monroe Country) and Marine Veteran Gregory Mason (McMinn County) celebrated the event by filing the courtroom with family members and Judge Thomas invited two special guest, Judge Sandra Donaghey, Criminal Court Judge 10th District and Monroe County Sheriff Tommy Jones.
   * This is marked a memorable moment in the 10th Judicial District Veterans Court history because of the participation and comments of the family members.
4. March 24, 2018. VTVT executes University of Louisville Kent School of Social Work’ Practicum affiliation agreement. This is our first Practicum program and was made possible by U of L Student Tiffany Peters and U of L Practicum Field Coordinator Tony Helm.
5. March 26, 2018. Council Chairs plan the first East Tennessee “Women Veterans Boot Camp.
   * Council Co-Chairman Freddie Owens and Chairman Ed Junod initiated a plan to hold the first Women Veterans Boot Camp in Eastern Tennessee and the first Women Veterans Summit since 2015.
   * Council committed to conduct the boot camp by the end of FY 2018.
   * Meeting was held at Freddie’s bedside in the hospital.
6. **March 30, 2018. Freddie J. Owens Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee co-founder goes to heaven on Good Friday.**
   * Freddie J. Owens went to heaven on Good Friday after 77 years of service and sacrifice to God, Country and family.
   * Freddie has had many titles, but soldier of God is the one he was most proud of.  Freddie was the co-founder & Co-Chairman of the Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council and co-founder & President of Vet to Vet Tennessee.
   * Freddie shared his special gift for helping and loving others. His life was consumed by service to his family, church, fellow veterans and gold star families. He will never be forgotten.
   * “Welcome Home!”
7. March 31, 2018. Judges to Host the First Saturday Expungement Court at First Baptist Church of Madisonville.
   * On April 21st, 10th Judicial District judges and court clerks with the help of Vet to Vet Tennessee, the UT Legal Clinic, pro bono attorneys, and community volunteers will host its first ever Saturday Expungement Clinic at the First Baptist Church of Madisonville from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
   * The Saturday Expungement Clinic will help people review their criminal records and determine whether charges can be removed, and old court costs waived.  Any resident of Bradley, McMinn, Monroe and Polk Counties with criminal charges in these counties may be eligible for free legal help.
   * Judge Dwaine “Benjy” Thomas.  Judge Thomas is hosting the event with Criminal Court Judge Sandra Donaghey, Court Clerk Marty Cook and University of Tennessee College of Law Professor Joy Radice.
8. April 12, 2018. New Council Co-Chair elected.
   * Christian, Mother and Navy Officer Veteran Emily Hager was unanimously elected as the Council’s second Co-Chair replacing Freddie J. Owens.
9. April 12, 2018. New Council Women Veterans Committee formed.
   * After five (5) years of planning, the Council approved the creation of the Women Veterans Committee.
   * Emily Hager was elected as Committee Chairwoman and Council member Cindy Winterberger was elected as Co-Chairwoman.
10. April 14, 2018. Clover Hill Senior Living Flag Raising.
    * Amvets Post 22 donated and installed a concrete base, flag pole and American flag to [Clover Hill Senior Living](https://cloverhillseniorliving.com/) on a beautiful Saturday morning filled with blue skies, sunshine and WWII, Korean and Vietnam Veterans residents from Clover Hill.
    * The ceremony took place on April 14, 2018 with many community leaders present, including Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell, Blount County Sheriff James Berrong, State Rep. Bob Ramsey, Maryville Police Chief Tony Crisp, Amvets Post 22 Commander Mark Frederick, State Commander of Tennessee AMVETS Daniel Koob and Vet to Vet Tennessee President Ed Junod and Council members Tay and Karl Griffith.
    * Vet to Vet Tennessee provided WWII, Korean & Vietnam Certificates of Honor and Mayor Mitchell and Commander Koob presented the certificates to each of the 5 WWII veterans, 4 Korean War veterans and 2 Vietnam veterans.
11. April 21, 2018. Free 10th Judicial District Expungement Clinic.
    * The Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) partnered with the University of Tennessee College of Law Professor Joy Radice, 10th Judicial District Criminal Court Judge Sandra Donaghy, Monroe County General Sessions/Veterans Court Judge Dwaine B. Thomas and Monroe County Court Clerk Marty Cook, the Knoxville Bar Association, TN Faith & Justice Alliance and the local pro-bono attorneys assisted by UT Law students. This was the second expungement clinic co-hosted by UT College of Law and VTVT.
    * The clinic was held at Vet to Vet Tennessee's Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation [First Baptist Church of Madisonville](http://fbcmadisonville.org/), Tennessee.  Thanks to First Baptist Church Pastor Chris Moore and his church members, this venue provided the clinic members and clients with a great environment to conduct court.  Not only did they provide the facility, but they also provided 11 volunteers and breakfast for everyone.
    * In two weeks, 280 individuals registered and approximately 200 attended the clinic.  First expungement clinic to include a Circuit, Criminal, General Sessions and Veterans Court Judges.  We had over 60 volunteers.  Program was scheduled from 9:00am until Noon but did not end until the last case was processed which occurred at 6:00PM
12. April 28, 2018. VTVT’s Repairs For Heroes completes 2 more projects.
    * The last two Saturdays of April were busy for the partners of the Repairs for Heroes (RFH) program.  Partners Blount County Habitat for Humanity and Maryville Amvets Post 22 two wheel-chair ramps for one disabled Veteran and one disabled Vietnam War Veteran widow.
    * These programs would not have been possible without the generosity and labor of the members of the Maryville Amvets Post 22.  Post Judge Advocate Joe Rainwater acknowledged for his construction leader and project management.
13. May 8, 2018. Rio Revolution Church Enrolls in Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation.
    * God gave Pastor Pacer Hepperly a dream of planting a church with a simple goal: to help people connect with God in order to reach their full potential.  39 people committed to help Pastor Pacer fulfill his dream and make it a reality. The first service was held at a local high school on January 7, 2007, with over 200 people in attendance.  Since then, God has blessed his church with steady incredible growth.
    * Rio's mission statement is *"Our vision is to see every man, woman, boy and girl that is a part of this ministry, develop to their full potential, and serve with excellence in the area of their giftedness, creating an atmosphere of unity, where lost people are drawn to Christ."*
    * On May 8th, Rio Church has agreed to be a lead ministry since their mission includes citizens of Blount County.
14. May 8, 2018. Rio Revolution Celebrate Recovery enrolls as a Veteran/Military Friendly Ministry.
    * [Rio Revolution Celebrate Recovery](http://www.riorevolution.com/celebrate-recovery)began a "Welcome Home" share group led by [Celebrate Recovery](https://www.celebraterecovery.com/) (CR) National Welcome Home Director Al North.
    * CR has been a successful Christ Centered 12 step program for over 25 years in over 29,000 congregations worldwide. Welcome Home is a new initiative by CR to identify veterans, military and their families and create Welcome Home share groups in existing CRs.
    * Rio CR enrolled in the Veteran/Military Friendly Ministry program and becomes the sixth CR ministry in Eastern Tennessee.
    * Vet to Vet Tennessee’s President and Director North agreed to expand the “Welcome Home” program and encourage existing and new CRs to enroll in the Military Chaplain Association VMFC program.
15. May 18, 2018. Morning Pointe of Powell's Pre-Memorial Day Celebration.
    * A wonderful ceremony was held at the [Morning Pointe of Powell](https://morningpointe.com/locations/morning-pointe-of-powell-tennessee/) community at the request of Activities Director Michelle Krohn.
    * Vet to Vet Tennessee members, Sheryn and Don Davis, Michael McGraile, Robert Cooter, Bill Richards, Gary Corea and Ed Junod presented VTVT's Armed Forces Medley program.
    * This facility is patriotic and filled with veteran residents. Attending the ceremony were 6 WWII, 13 WWII surviving spouses, 8 Korean War, 6 Korean surviving spouses, 5 Vietnam, 1 Vietnam War surviving spouse and 1 Desert Storm veteran participated in the event.  Two residents served in WWII and Korea and one Vietnam Veteran served 3 tours in Vietnam.
16. May 21, 2018. Vet to Vet Tennessee and the Military Chaplains Association of the United States (MCA) launches nationwide Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation initiative.
    * VTVT updated and modernized the [www.vmfc-usa.org](http://www.vmfc-usa.org) website and launched it on May 21, 2018.  MCA’s new Executive Director Fr. Razz Waff, DMin, BCC announced the VMFC initiative and website in his MCA May 23, 2018 Newsgram.
17. May 23, 2018. Monroe County Veterans Court Graduation.
    * Air Force veteran Keith Duncan completes the Monroe County Veterans Court (VC) program with the support and care from Helen Ross McNabb Military Services Center Clinical Therapist Tony Weaver, Monroe County VC Judge Dwaine B. Thomas, Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) VC Mentor Coordinator Bob Hatley and VTVT mentors.
    * Members of the Monroe County DAV, council members of the Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council and several mentors attended the celebration.  Also in court this afternoon were members the[Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program.](https://www.casaofeasttn.org)
    * After the graduation, Judge Thomas asked VTVT members to stay to witness the swearing in of three new CASA volunteers.   The court also recognized that Vet to Vet Tennessee is now assisting veterans in the family court/DCS system.  A partnership between CASA and VTVT will be very beneficial to the children of Monroe County.
18. May 27, 2018. Ambassador for Peace Korean War Veteran Medal Awarded to James Ray Cox of Heflin.
    * "Thank you so much for assisting us in awarding my brother the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal. My son-in-law, George Barajaz (USAF Lt Col Ret) assisted us in presenting the medal this past Memorial Day weekend with 3 generations of family in attendance. It was a touching ceremony and a great way to honor his service. [*I have included a few pictures*](https://photos.app.goo.gl/olFdFDDLDCIvA2wn1) for you to enjoy. I can't tell you how much this meant to our entire family."  Wanda Dean.
    * Vet to Vet Tennessee is a proud partner with the Minister, Patriots and Veterans Affairs, Republic of Korea and are honored to recognize James Ray Cox as a proud American hero.
19. May 28, 2018. East Tennessee Veterans remember comrade, advocate Freddie Owens.
    * *"The definition of an American patriot, hero and selfless human being: Freddie J. Owens...Rest in peace Sir! Semper Fi."* USMC Dr. Richard J. Junod.
20. June 6, 2018. Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee awards $5,000.00 grant to Vet to Vet Tennessee.
    * Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee awarded a 2018 Phase I grant award to VTVT for their initiative "Veteran/First Responder QPR Suicide Prevention on June 6, 2018 at the Cherokee County Club.
    * This grant was made possible because of a referral we received from our accounting firm's bookkeeper, Melissa Powell.  Thank you, Melissa, for the recommendation.
21. June 22, 2018. Another VTVT “Repairs for Heroes” project begins in Walland, Tennessee.
    * Repairs for Heroes (RFH) remodeled Korean War Veteran Virgil Cooley’s bath room and installed rails on their existing ramp. We also informed the Colley's about the VA's Home Improvement and Structural Alteration (HISA) grant and discussed the Veterans Health Administration primary care processes.  RFH is more than just home repairs, it is a holistic approach including the mind, body and spirit.
    * Amvets Post 22 and VTVT partner together to make necessary repairs for the disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities.  RFH's volunteers were Butch Adam, Ed Junod, Joe Rainwater, Karl Griffith, Tom Green and two sons.
22. June 25, 2018. East TN Korean War veterans honored by KAKA and VTVT.
    * Korean War Veterans from around East Tennessee joined together to enjoy lunch and to honor each other. 68 years have passed since the Korean War, and it is still referred to as the "forgotten war" as it is not often discussed.
    * Knoxville Area Korean Association (KAKA) and Vet to Vet Tennessee partner to honor these veterans for their service and sacrifice. 65 veterans were presented with the Ambassador for Peace medal issued from the South Korean government as a token of appreciation for defending their freedoms.
    * VTVT is a proud partner of the Patriots & Veterans Affairs, Republic of Korea.
23. June 28, 2018. VTVT helps Wyoming Michigan Veteran receive his Ambassador For Peace Medal.
    * *"I wanted to give my sincerest thanks to you and your organization. My Grandfather Eugene G. Roberts was so happy and surprised when I gave him the Ambassador of Peace Medal from you guys. It definitely made his 85th birthday special. I also was able to locate a lost picture of him and his recon/scout squad from the war and had it blown up to be able to see faces and details again. When I was stationed overseas, I had the luck to be in Korea for the 50th anniversary and of the Inchon Landing and the 50th anniversary of the Armistice Treaty. I was the first grandchild to enlist in the military from both sides of my family and it’s because I wanted to try to be even a half the man my grandpa was. I guess that’s why after the navy I joined the army because I didn’t feel I had lived up to a man of his stature. As promised, I have enclosed a photo of my grandfather and I. I am so lucky to still have my grandpa and listen to every story and enjoy every minute while I have with him. My grandpa does not use computers, but he and my grandmother wanted to send their deep gratitude for honoring his service."*Sincerely, Nathan D. Moran (Afghanistan/Korean Defense Vet).
24. July 3, 2018. VTVT provides BMHC staff and volunteers WW II and Korean War Veterans Certificates of Honor and Vietnam Veterans with the Vietnam War Commemoration Presidential Proclamation and lapel.
    * VTVT also provides Certificates of Honor for the WWII, Korean and Vietnam War surviving spouses with Certificates of Honor and Veteran hats to honor our heroes and their families.  Below is an email we received from BMHC staff member Anne Van Curen who visited with two hospice veterans today.
      + *"I just returned from visiting 2 of our hospice families. I traveled to these homes with Gary and Jeff - 2 of our Hospice Volunteers who happen to be Veterans. The purpose of our visits were to present Hospice patients who are Veterans a "Certificate of Thankfulness for their Service from a Grateful Nation".  As I listened to a daughter talk about moving all over the world with her single parent Dad, who served in the Army for 27 years, it occurred again to me that we need not only to thank our Veterans, but their family members!”*
      + *“In another home, where there were two Vietnam Veterans, they both sat with tears in their eyes as they were presented with their certificates. "****I didn't expect this - it means so much!"*** *one said.*
      + *“This year July the 4th means more to me, I believe, as I have had the honor to sit with these men and woman in their memories and their tears. I am thankful Hospice allows us the opportunity to recognize those who have given so much to secure our freedom!  Let us today once again be Grateful!”* Blount Memorial Hospice Volunteer Coordinator Anne Van Curen.
      + We are blessed and honored to have such wonderful, patriotic partner.  Thank you.
25. July 7, 2018. TN WWII American Airman dog tag found in Italy.
    * Welcome Home Mr. Henry Hunter Jr. from Fountain City, TN!   On July 7, 2017 we at Vet to Vet Tennessee received an emailed from Agostino Alberti, a Lombardy Italian teacher and a member of the archaeological group [Air Crash Po](http://www.aircrashpo.com/), about a WWII American Airman dog tag found in wooded, [Apennines mountains](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Apennine+Mountains/@42.4054808,8.0771868,6z/data=!4m13!1m7!3m6!1s0x132ed9d326a9469f:0xa46caf27ea740bfc!2sApennine+Mountains!3b1!8m2!3d43.2728024!4d12.5836413!3m4!1s0x132ed9d326a9469f:0xa46caf27ea740bfc!8m2!3d43.2728024!4d12.5836413?hl=en) area  of Italy.
    * According to Ago, his "friend Tommaso Teora was investigating a wooded area "between Lucca and Pistoia", looking for the crash-point of a B-17F bomber which was shot down during a bombing mission over the Bologna main M/Y on October 3, 1943 and he and another researcher named Francesco Pioli have found the dog tag."  According to Mr. Hunter's family, Mr. Hunter and his crew made a raft using the wing of the craft, and they floated down the river until they met up with Italian partisans who assisted them in returning to American forces.
    * Through our partnerships with the Knox County Mayor's Office and one of our Veteran/Military Friendly Congregations Fountain City United Methodist Church, and a local mortician and military history enthusiast, Mr. Hunter's family was found.
    * Such an honor to assist in bringing an artifact home from our soldiers and inform his family.  We are grateful and honored to Agostino Alberti, Tommaso Teora, Francesco Pioli, Luca Merli,  Jeff Berry, Buzz Buswell, [Fountain City United Methodist Church](http://www.fountaincityumc.org/) Pastor John Gargis and www.tnvhc.org for bringing all of this together.
26. July 11, 2018. MCA's Weekly Newsgram
    * This week's column focuses on the Veteran Military Friendly Congregation Ministry of the MCA (VMFC). This ministry was inherited nearly two years ago has shown some remarkable growth in the last two months, thanks to the great teamwork of CH Ron Skaggs, working with Everett Price of the Episcopal Church’s Brotherhood of St Andrew, Ed Junod, the President of Vet to Vet Tennessee and Jack Figel, the MCA Deputy Executive Director.
27. July 18, 2018. VTVT Partners with the 917 Society to Teach 8th Graders!
    * The 917 Society is providing each Tennessee 8th grader their very own pocket Constitution in honor of September 17th, Constitution Day!
    * Fundraising efforts have begun for the celebration of Constitution Day on September 17, 2018 in order to provide 85,000 pocket Constitutions to the next class of 8th graders in Tennessee. Our September 17th Constitution Day Celebration and fundraising event will be co-sponsored by Professional Educators of Tennessee.
    * The 917 Society announced the partnership with Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) for helping to provide Constitutions for Blount and Monroe County classrooms. VTVT purchased 1,000 pocket Constitutions for Blount County.
    * Council members Sheryn and Don Davis purchased 500 pocket Constitutions for Monroe County.
28. July 25, 2018. Monroe County Veterans Court, Madisonville, Tennessee.
    * A high risk suicidal justice involved veteran graduate gives thanks to God, Monroe County Veterans Court Judge Thomas, Helen Ross McNabb Military Services Center Clinical Therapist Tony Weaver, VA Knoxville Outpatient Clinic Debbie Cohan & Christy Cook, Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) mentors and Pastor Chris Moore, [First Baptist Church of Madisonville](http://fbcmadisonville.org/) for saving his life.
    * Robert retired from the US Air Force after 20 years and 9 months of honorable service and is a past VFW Post Commander.  Robert entered the program on January 25, 2018 and needed much more than legal help.
    * McNabb's Clinical Therapist Tony Weaver summed up Robert's status in an email  he sent to VTVT.
      + *"I am very excited to inform you that R.B. has completed the goals of his treatment plan at Helen Ross McNabb Military Services.  Since admittance into this program the transformation R.B. has undergone has been incredibly awe-inspiring if not, nothing short of a miraculous turn around.*
      + *During his intake, I heart-wrenchingly listened to R.B.’s words as they reflected absolute and utter hopelessness and dejection.  Hearing him talk, his future outlook was one of the bleakest I had ever heard.  His final words to me that day before slowly exiting my office captured the very essence of his mind as he reported, “I'm tired of hurting.  This is something nobody can fix; I'm stuck with it.”  R.B. added, “I don’t think this (treatment) will work . . . but I am willing to try.”  I am so very glad he tried.*
      + *After much effort, time, and extremely painful processing, R.B. now reports that he has found “genuine happiness” and that, "Everything is so joyful.”  I attribute this dramatic transformation to his new-found faith in God, the patient yet persistent work of Veteran’s Affair’s therapist Christy Cook, and the work R.B. has completed in this program.  His travels have just begun down this new pathway, but I am, nonetheless, convinced his best days are yet ahead of him."*Tony Weaver.
      + During the ceremony, Robert thanked everyone especially God for saving his life.  He said his life dramatically changed when he volunteered at VTVT’s Expungement Clinic hosted Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation First Baptist Church of Madisonville as he worked alongside of Pastor Moore.
29. July 28, 2018. VMFC Rio Revolution Church’s Helping Hands program giving away shoes and school supplies to kids in need.
    * As the time to head back to school approaches Rio Revolution Church in Maryville Tennessee is giving away free shoes and school supplies to thousands of kids in need; actual attendance was over 8,250 with 670 volunteers.  The Rio Revolution Church is a proud member of the Military Chaplains Association of America's /Military Friendly Congregation and conducted their 14th annual "Helping Hands" program.
30. July 30, 2018. Monroe County 12-year-old chooses DAV Post #93 as his Summer Mission Project.
    * Cole Kirkland, a 12 year old 7th Grader from Rule Vale Elementary School, Tellico Plains, Tennessee was challenged to do a summer mission project by his [River of Life Ministries](https://www.facebook.com/pages/River-of-Life-Ministries/306732306094287)' Youth leaders, Nate and Bretta Wright.
    * Cole decided to set up a lemonade stand with the proceeds going to the Monroe County Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Post #93.  Cole asked for help from his school friend Kyle Duckworth.  Kyle is a 7th grade Rule Vale Elementary School student and member of Epperson Presbyterian Church in Coker Creek Tennessee.
    * On Monday July 30, 2018, Cole gave Taylor Thomas, DAV Post #93 member,  an envelope with $600.00 cash.  Thanks to Cole & Kyle for the hard work and thoughtfulness for caring about our American Veterans.  And a special thank you to Betta and Nate for encouraging Cole to *"Do Something"* for someone else.
31. August 6, 2018. New Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation in Vonore Tennessee.
    * Pastor Mitch Ingram enrolls his [Lakeside Missionary Baptist Church](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Lakesidemissionarybaptistchurchyouth/reviews/?ref=page_internal) into MCA's VMFC network after being elected as Monroe County Tennessee Mayor.  Before his election, Pastor Ingram was not aware of the VMFC program but enrolled as soon as he learned about it.  Mayor/Pastor Ingram also supports Veterans Courts, Expungement Clinics, Celebrate Recovery and suicide prevention.
    * Lakeside Missionary Baptist Church has a very active youth group.  Pastor Ingram has agreed to accept a QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper training scholarship from Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT) to train his youth leaders and youth about suicide prevention.  VTVT not only provides scholarships to VMFCs but also provides suicide prevention material at no cost to the Church.
32. August 8, 2018. Monroe County Mayor received "The George A. Thomas Award".
    * Monroe County Tennessee Mayor Tim Yates receives the George Award from VTVT Secretary Bob Hatley and President Ed Junod for his dedicated service and faith help the citizens of Monroe County for eight years.
    * Mayor Yate was especially supportive of the MC Veterans Court program and always attended the VC graduations.  Mayor Yates was also supportive of VTVT and lead the way to provide VTVT with a County grant in 2017.  We have been honored to have Mayor Yates as a faithful servant and are grateful for his support.
    * August 9, 2019. VTVT contracts with University of Louisville to host first practicum student. Tiffany Peters is the student and Ed Junod is the Field/Task Supervisor. This is U of L’s pilot practicum program with an online student.
33. August 20, 2018. 17 New QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Instructors in Eastern TN.
    * Vet to Vet TN (VTVT) received grants from Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett, Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee and several individual donors to help VTVT train suicide prevention advocates.  The donations allowed VTVT to grant seventeen $500.00 scholarships.
    * On August 20th, VTVT and [Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network](http://tspn.org/) (TSPN), QPR Institute trained and certified 17 QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Instructors.  The training was hosted by [Military Chaplains Association](https://www.mca-usa.org/veteran-military-friendly-congregations/) Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation's member, [Rio Revolution Church](http://www.riorevolution.com/).  TSPN's Executive Director and QPR's Master Instructor lead the training along with VTVT's President.
34. August 20, 2018. 150th Anniversary for New Hope Cumberland Presbyterian Celebrates Veterans
    * Pastor Dr. David Koopman celebrates the Church's 150 anniversary and recognizing the church as the first Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation in Monroe County Tennessee.  Vet to Vet Tennessee supported the special celebration by recognizing two Korean War Veterans with the Republic of South Korea's Ambassador For Peace Medal.
    * The Wolf family is one of the oldest families in Monroe County and the one of the oldest members of the 150 year old church.  The Wolf family had three brother who served in the Korean War.  Two living brothers are still members of the Church; Bill and John Wolf.
    * Church member & Korean American Hye You Coleman presented the Ambassador For Peace medal to the Wolf brothers.
    * According to Pastor David, "*there wasn't a dry eye in the house."*
35. August 30, 2018. Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee preparing for Women Veterans Summit.
    * Knoxville Regional Veteran Mental Health Council Co-Chairwoman and Chairwoman Women Veterans Summit Emily Hager is helping pull the summit together in early October and explains the mission of the event.
    * Summary of the event was aired on WBIR Channel 10’s Service and Sacrifice segment; John Becker was the host and great friend and comrade of Freddie J. Owens and VTVT.
    * All hands-on deck!
36. September 13, 2018. VA Dr. Robert Hierholzer received The Joseph "JL” Tucker award.
    * Department of Veterans Affairs Knoxville Outpatient Clinic's Acting Supervisory Psychiatrist Dr. Robert Hierholzer receives the JL Award from Mountain Home VAMC Facility Director Dean Borsis on behalf of the Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee for his outstanding service and sacrifice as the Chief Mental Health Director at the clinic for over 1 year.
    * Dr. Hierholzer also served as the Council's KOPC liaison. Upon receiving the award from Mr. Borsis, Dr Hierholzer sent us the following email: Dr. Hierholzer retired at the end of August 2018.
    * "I was utterly surprised and honored to receive the Joseph “JL” Tucker Memorial Award from Mr. Borsos just a few moments ago.  It means a lot to me.  I will write more later, but until then I wanted to communicate my deep appreciation."  Dr. Hierholzer.
37. September 17, 2018. 2018 Constitution Day.
    * Members of Maryville Amvets Post 22 and Vet to Vet Tennessee visited 8th grade students in Middle Schools in Blount County.  TN Representative Jerome Moon and Vet to Vet Tennessee donated the funds to distribute 3,000 personal Constitution handbooks.
    * The idea to give a copy of the US Constitution to all 8th graders in Tennessee was conceived by Joni Bryant, founder of the 917 Society.
    * Members of Vet to Vet Tennessee and Monroe County DAV Post #93 visited 8th grade students in Middle Schools in Monroe County.  Council members Sheryn and Don Davis donated the funds to distribute 700 personal Constitution handbooks.
38. September 30, 2018. Council, VTVT and partners and special guest are finalizing the details for the inaugural Freddie J. Owens Women Veterans Summit scheduled for October 4, 2018.
    * The event is hosted by one of the first Veteran/Military Friendly Congregations, Redemption Church and senior Pastor Ed King.
    * The first annual Freddie J. Owens Memorial Award will be presented to two individuals, one civilian and one military/veteran exemplary veteran advocate. Patriots to be recognized at the Summit.
    * September 30, 2018. •Fiscal year practicum complete
      + To continue through April 2019 with Military and Family Social Work student
      + Tiffany Peters accumulated 140 hours of approximately 500 to be completed by 2nd semesters end.
      + Ed Junod served as field supervisor with Dr. Susan Rhema and Professor Ramie Martin-Galijatovic from U of L to foster experience that parallels with SW curriculum specific to veteran social work.

**Concerns brought up during the year that impact Veterans and the delivery of mental health services**:

1. Compliance with VA’s Veteran Suicide prevention initiative and VAOIG Suicide Prevention report
2. Mountain Home VAMC telephone system

**VA Staff Presentations during the Fiscal Year 2017:**

1. Council receives VAMC & KOPC updates from Mountain Home & KOPC leadership at each Council meeting. Extremely helpful.
2. Mountain Home VAMC Chief of Chaplain services regularly attends the monthly meeting.
3. Dr. Scott Swan permanent replacement for KOPC’s Mental Health Director.

**Veterans Mental Health Council Information Sharing to VISN 9 and Mountain Home Medical Center:**

Council shares information during Council meetings, Committee & Outreach briefings with the VISN 9 Mental Health Director, and Mountain Home VAMC & Knoxville Outpatient Clinic Liaisons.

**Goals for Fiscal Year 2018:**

1. Provide QPR Gatekeeper Instructors scholarship to over 50 suicide prevention advocates
2. Expand Repairs for Heroes program
3. Modify Veterans Court program to include DCS/Family justice involved veterans
4. Create a Theatrical Suicide Prevention drama/comedy/musical play Council Committee
5. Replace Council Chairman

Respectfully Submitted:

A close up of a device

Description generated with high confidence

Edouard “Ed” Junod

Chairman, Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council

1. The council gives permission for a copy of this report to be shared on the VA VMHC SharePoint.

\_\_X\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

1. The council gives permission for a copy of this report to be shared with other VMHCs.

\_\_X\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_\_no