

EyesRight

Fall 2023 Edition



2023 Veteran of the Year Goes the Extra Mile

Summit County VSC Recognizes Selfless Volunteer Tyrone Sanders for His Work with Local Veterans



—James C. Seminaroti— **VETERAN OF THE YEAR** 2023 AWARD



U.S. Marine Tyrone Sanders has continued his calling to serve others long after his active duty in the United States Marine Corps, earning him the 2023 Veteran of the Year award. One of Tyrone's biggest accomplishments is his work in the community with the [Summit County Stand Down](#).

He started volunteering in 2017 because of a volunteer he met while working at the Akron VA as a lab

technician, Ellen Leidy. She was running the Stand Down at the time. During his first Stand Down, Tyrone helped by taking vitals of participants and soon realized how important the event was to the community.

"I saw all the great things the event was doing and knew I wanted to be involved," Tyrone said.

When Ellen decided to step back as the Chairperson of the Summit County Stand Down there was conversation about turning the event into a resource fair. Tyrone was worried



Ellet High School Jr. ROTC Presenting the Colors to Stand Down Opening

VA Houses More than 38,000 Homeless Veterans in 2023

On November 29, the Department for Veteran Affairs [announced](#) a significant milestone: 38,847 previously homeless Veterans have secured permanent housing as of October 2023. This amazing achievement was completed in October 2023 – two months prior to their year-end goal.

During October, the VA also helped connect 34,498 unsheltered Veterans with housing and other essential resources, surpassing the Department's calendar year goal by 123%.

Additionally, the VA has ensured that over 96% of Veterans housed have remained in housing, exceeding their target retention rate.

More than 93% of the Veterans who faced homelessness again have been rehoused or are on the path to rehousing.

Resolving the Veteran homelessness epidemic has been a top priority for the VA and President Biden, who showed his commitment to the issue when he made supporting Veterans a key pillar of his [Unity Agenda](#).

The VA focuses on combating Veteran homelessness by connecting with homeless Veterans, understanding their unique needs, and delivering comprehensive support.

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Director's Corner



Services for Vets

Tips for Enrolling in VA Health Care

The [PACT Act](#) is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history.

The PACT Act is here to stay, and Veterans and survivors can file for benefits anytime. The sooner you file, the sooner you can start getting your earned benefits.

The PACT Act will bring these changes:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- Adds 20+ more presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps us improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure?

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition.

But for some conditions, we automatically assume (or "presume") that your service caused your condition. We call these "presumptive conditions."

We consider a condition presumptive when it's established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

If you're a surviving family member of a Veteran, you may be eligible for these benefits:

- A monthly VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC) payment. You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse, dependent child, or parent of a Veteran who died from a service-connected disability.
- A one-time accrued benefits payment. You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse, dependent child, or dependent parent of a Veteran who the VA owed unpaid benefits to at the time of their death.
- A Survivors Pension. You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse or child of a Veteran with wartime service.

In Appreciation,

Larry D. Moore

Executive Director



We provide financial assistance* for basic living needs to eligible Veterans and their dependents.

- Mortgage payments
- Rent
- Utilities
- Food
- Children's school clothing
- Adult work clothing
- Dentures, glasses and hearing aids

Free to Veterans!

- Regularly scheduled transportation for medical appointments at VA medical facilities and Ohio Veterans Home

* Other types of financial assistance may be considered on a case by case basis. All types of assistance are subject to change based on need and funding.

Veterans Affairs Assistance

- Assistance applying for Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits
- Preparation of VA forms and paperwork
- Supportive documentation of claims and pertinent data
- Proper submission of claims to the VA
- Service connected compensation
- Non-service pension
- Widows pension
- Burial benefits
- Headstones

If you are a Veteran in financial need or need help with your VA claim, please visit us at 1060 E. Waterloo Rd., Akron, OH, or call

(330) 643-2830.



2023 Veteran of the Year, from page 1

about all the progress made with Stand Down and knew all the Vets it helped would be disappointed if they no longer offered all the services previously provided.

"I felt it was my calling to be there and work hard to keep the resources available to Veterans for the event," Tyrone said.



Tyrone became the Chairperson in 2019 and has continuously put effort into planning and growing the event. He traveled to different Stand Downs and gathered ideas on how to improve the event. His research led to the addition of a job and school fair during the Stand Down in September, which attracted recruiters from 15 employers and representatives of local colleges and trade schools.

Following the annual event, Tyrone keeps leftover boots and other clothing items in his car to share with Vets in need within the community.

Tyrone remembers meeting one Vet at the VA who couldn't afford a pair of boots or a winter coat. Tyrone gave him what he needed that day and the man started crying.

"I told him about the Stand Down that we have every year and he attends it now and always thanks me when he comes in," Tyrone said. "Moments like this make it worthwhile to keep going."

Ellen also introduced Tyrone to the [Marine Corps League](#). She was a big influence in Tyrone's life because she introduced him to many of the community organizations he is involved in today.

"Ellen led by example," Tyrone said. "She put in a lot

of volunteer hours at the VA and really cared about the Veterans."

Tyrone joined the [Chesty Puller #269 Detachment](#) in Cuyahoga Falls in 2017.



CHESTY PULLER

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE DETACHMENT 269

Like Ellen, he has held multiple positions in the detachment, including Jr. Vice Commandant, Commandant and, currently, Sr. Vice Commandant. Given his work with the VA, Tyrone regularly updates the detachment on important news, including available services, vaccine or flu shot updates, laws that impact health care access, and other items.

He also became a member of the Ohio Department of the Marine Corps League at the state level. In 2019, he served as Jr. Vice Commandant and in 2020, took on the role of Judge Advocate, which he still holds today.

Tyrone attends quarterly meetings with the detachment to discuss volunteer projects, how to better reach out to Veterans in need, how to improve recruiting and other services.

The state meetings, however, are where Tyrone's efforts really shine. The

state meetings also serve as a fundraiser for local detachments, and Tyrone would host these meetings. His wife would cook food, and he would put together gift baskets and raffles to help raise money to assist more Vets in the community.

In honor of his extensive involvement in these groups and meetings, Tyrone received the Marine of the Year Award for the Chesty Puller #269 Detachment in 2021.

Winning the Summit County VSC 2023 Veteran of the Year award became a full circle moment for Tyrone when he learned that the person who nominated him was someone he met in the Marine Corp League as well as a past recipient of the Veteran of the Year award himself.





Golfing Supports the ALS Association

The 7th Annual James Seminaroti Benefit Golf Outing, hosted by the Summit County VSC and American Legion Post #473, was a great success – we all had fun while contributing to such a worthy cause! The event raises money for the ALS Association and is held every year to honor James Seminaroti, a local Veteran who died from ALS in 1981.

The charity event golf outing, held October 9, raised over \$1,350 and brought together 49 golfers who played 18 holes, enjoyed a steak dinner and awesome door prizes, like Ohio State football tickets. There also was the event's first-ever "hole-in-one" winner!

To our signage and event sponsors, THANK YOU. We are thankful for your dedication to our Veterans and contribution to the ALS Association.

See you next year, golfers! ★



Thank You, Veterans!

Recently, our annual Veteran Appreciation Cookout grew to more than 200 people – what a great turnout and way to show our appreciation to so many local Vets who have served our country! We, at the VSC, especially enjoyed the fellowship – and hope all attendees did, too.



It was great to serve Veterans – by creating dog tags and assisting with Veteran ID cards.

This year, we enjoyed the talented Guitars for Vets students who played throughout the event and who were joined by Derby Down Chorus. What a wonderful event.

Join us next October. We hope to see you there. ★

Don't miss the latest news, events & resources from the Summit County VSC



Signup Today!



www.vscsummitoh.us/eyesright-signup/

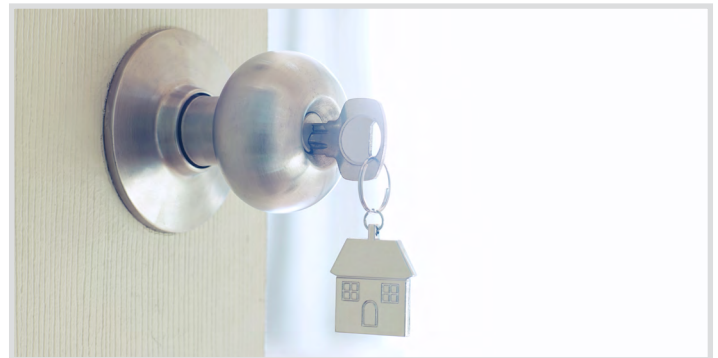
VA Houses, from page 1

These efforts are built on the evidence-based "Housing First" approach, an initiative that focuses on securing housing for Veterans and providing them the resources they need to stay housed.

This includes:

- Health care support
- Job training
- Legal aid
- Education assistance

The VA and its nationwide community partners help Veterans to secure permanent housing, offering rental or ownership opportunities for Vets, often with subsidies to ensure affordability. Staff at the VA also assist Veterans in reuniting them with their family and friends in another effort to help end homelessness.



The Summit County VSC is your bridge to the VA and is here to support you. If you or a Veteran you know is experiencing homelessness or financial hardship, please contact us at 330-643-2830 or stop by our office at 1060 E. Waterloo Rd. in Akron.

For more information about the VA's efforts to end homelessness visit <https://www.va.gov/homeless>.