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Colleagues and friends,

I always tell my students that semesters seem long at the outset, but they go by quickly once they've started (particularly when the weather is still nice). And with a snap of our fingers, here we are in October with a third of the semester behind us. I think we should celebrate that, not in a "thank goodness I cannot wait for it to end" framing, but from a framing that life as we know it is continuing to move predictably forward. Predictability, in an extended period that has been heavily punctuated with uncertainty, carries a certain comfort.



We are still in the throes of the pandemic and it appears that we will continue on this path for a bit longer, but for now let's focus on the "normal" instead of the "new normal" that none of us likes all that much. Homecoming is here, the leaves are changing colors, and the days are pleasant. We are reminded of the joy that comes with living in an area that enjoys four seasons.

I want to draw your attention to three things this month. First, is the Call to Action - *Cultivate Compassion*. I hope the fall allows us all to slow down and reflect upon the importance of compassion in our lives and in our world.



Second, is a reminder that October is Hispanic Heritage Month. Please take time this month to learn more about the ways in which Hispanic Americans have contributed to and enriched our nation at [this site](#) hosted by the Library of Congress. Also, check out the article on page 9 that highlights the service of three Hispanic Americans.

Finally, I want to let you know that it has been decided that VALOR will not be coordinating an in-person Veterans Day ceremony on the NDSU campus this year. While this disappoints us, we believe it is important to err on the side of caution while the pandemic remains a threat to folks' health. There will be other community events that honor veterans that we hope you can attend if you are interested in doing so. We will gather that information and share it with you next month.

I trust you will enjoy your October and all the "normal" things it offers. As always, if you have any student veteran matters that you need assistance with, do not hesitate to reach out to me or Jim Stoddard. We are always available to you regardless of any changes in operations. Thank you all for your enduring commitment to VALOR and our student veterans at NDSU. Stay safe and well.

Carol Cwiak, J.D., Ph.D.  
VALOR Faculty Liaison



**Board Members**

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- Thomas Webb



**VCO Update**  
Jim Stoddard

You can visit Jim on campus at the Veterans Educational Training Office in Ceres 329; or by phone at 701-231-9706; or by email at [james.stoddard@ndsu.edu](mailto:james.stoddard@ndsu.edu).

### Health & Safety: Covid-19

NDSU continues to emphasize safe practices and vaccination to reduce the spread of the virus on campus.

Face masks are required in the classroom and recommended in other situations where physical distancing of six feet or more is not possible. There are also reporting requirements for those who test positive for the virus. Let's all do our best to #ProtectTheHerd.

Just a couple quick updates from me this month. NDSU has just about 380 veteran-status students this semester as of census day, so that's down quite a bit from recent semesters. I have been coordinating on resolving a few special situations for military students, but mostly things seem to be running smoothly, as far as I know!

In October and November, we do expect the US Department of Veterans Affairs' "VITAL" program office to hold two more webinars in its series on best practices for supporting student veterans. These free presentations by expert guest speakers are specifically designed to give college faculty and staff improved insight into a range of issues impacting student veteran success. Last year, we had some great feedback on every presentation! The date, time, topics, and speakers haven't been announced yet, but instructions for linking to the webinar will come by e-mail when they're available, or contact me for details. For those unable to attend the webinar live at the scheduled time, I'll attempt (again) to get a link to each recording when it's available so you can watch at your convenience (I never was able to get the links last year).

### LEARN MORE

As you may recall, Jim Stoddard has attended the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Symposium for the past two years to learn more about what is being done at other higher education institutions to serve student veterans. Thanks to Jim, you can access over 40 NASPA presentations on military-connected students from both the 2020 and 2021 symposiums [here](#). These presentations are from representatives of higher education institutions from across the United States and are solely focused on the creation, delivery, and measurement of programs focused on meeting the specific needs of student veterans.

### Fall Reading: Books for, and about, veterans



For more books like this see Amazon's Bestseller List on this topic [here](#).





## Veteran's Voice

*Craig Schwinden*

*VALOR Student Veteran Representative*

Greetings fellow Student Veterans,

Fall is now officially upon us, and we are still having some very nice weather. As I write this article, the long-range forecast says nothing but 70s for the foreseeable future for daytime highs. Fingers crossed! I hope you all had a great September and school is good.

With the arrival of October, we need to start thinking about registering for the spring semester. Depending upon the number of credits you have, you will register for spring and summer semesters on or after October 28<sup>th</sup>. I bring this up because with the apparent recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, most of, if not all, the special "COVID rules" regarding G.I.

Bill benefits are expiring on December 21<sup>st</sup> (the end of the current fall semester). The most important one is the "converted course" rate which allows all students to be paid the full monthly housing allowance (MHA) for courses that were converted from in-resident to online due to COVID. Ordinarily, online courses are not paid at the full rate. Hence, when registering for spring classes, as well as future semesters, you must register for in-residence courses to receive the full monthly housing allowance.

You can follow any changes at this link: [Student FAQs: COVID-19 Information Affecting Education Benefits for Students - Education and Training \(va.gov\)](#). We will do our best to keep you up-to-date on any changes. I would also recommend following the [Bison Student Veterans Facebook page](#).

With the end of September, Suicide Prevention Awareness Month comes to an end, but it is not the end of our attention to this important topic. Please remember that there are many resources out there for those that struggle every day. It does not matter what your struggle is, it matters that you recognize it and get the help you have earned

and deserve. No one wants to watch their friend or family member struggle. Ask for Help! Or Help Someone!

Recognizing there is an issue and asking for help shows inner strength, not weakness. Remember to use the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255, press 1). Here are two other helpful sites: [Lifeline](#) and [Veteran Suicide Prevention | Veterans Affairs](#).

While reading the newsletter this month check out the article on page 9 that highlights some of our Hispanic American brothers and sisters who have served with honor, distinction, and have made their share of sacrifice for "U.S."

Lastly, please make sure and check out the profile for our Student Veteran of The Month. For October of 2021, our Student Veteran of The Month is Susan Petersen. Susan comes to us from the U.S. Army, and she really likes animals (as you will see when you read her profile). Welcome to NDSU and the Bison Student Veterans, Susan! Hooah!!

As always, if you have an idea for a story or something you would like to see covered in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact me at [craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu](mailto:craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu).

## TRAINING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



The VA has developed [provider education and training resources](#) that are free and cover a variety of important topics. They also offer webinars on a variety of topics that are open to non-VA attendees.



The VA also has also developed easily accessible materials that are specifically focused on [veterans' life challenges](#) such as sleep issues, parenting, and moving beyond challenges.



[PsychArmor](#) provides free courses, podcasts, and webinars focused on educating the civilian community about military culture. The coursework offerings are compact online training videos delivered by national subject matter experts. Presentations are grouped by topic and by role, so you can easily explore the content that interests and applies to you. You can register for a free account to keep track of your learning, but that's not required to view the presentations. You can also earn [badges](#) for taking small blocks of courses that are topically focused.

**"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear." ~Mark Twain**



Name: Susan Andersen

Major/Minor: Pre-Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Technology

Originally from: Moorhead, MN

Current city: Fargo, ND

Career plans after college: Veterinary School

Military Service/Awards: Army 13 years, Engineer

NDSU activities/engagement: Vice President of Vet Tech Club; Pre-Vet Med Club; Horsemen's Club; Photography Club; Collegiate Cattlewomen Club; and Bison Student Veterans Club

Community activities/engagement: Volunteer as a Warrior Leader for Wounded Warrior Project; Volunteer with Patriot Assistance Dogs out of Detroit Lakes, MN

An interesting tidbit about the veteran: I love my dog.

Favorite experience/memories/etc. at NDSU: I have experienced great joy holding a day-old piglet and petting a dairy cow named Annie.



Susan Andersen

## CALL TO ACTION: **CULTIVATE COMPASSION**

One of those powerful things we can offer to our fellow humans is compassion. According to [Greater Good Magazine](#), "Compassion literally means 'to suffer together.' Among emotion researchers, it is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering." But compassion does not just benefit those it is given to, it also benefits the giver. Research shows "when we feel compassion, our heart rate slows down, we secrete the 'bonding hormone' oxytocin, and regions of the brain linked to empathy, caregiving, and feelings of pleasure light up, which often results in our wanting to approach and care for other people" ([Greater Good Magazine](#)).



It isn't always easy to be compassionate. We all get busy and can find ourselves too self-focused to see and respond humanely to others. This is an unhappy outcome for all involved because practicing compassion [creates outcomes that improve one's life across a wide variety of spectrums](#). The Call to Action this month is to consciously cultivate compassion through your actions every day by seeing people as individuals (not abstractions), looking for commonalities with others, and realizing that you have the power to make a difference. Compassion begins and ends with us, as we are the ones who feed or starve it. May we all reap the benefits of compassion as both givers and receivers, and may we remember the words of Mart Anne Radmacher, "There is no small act of kindness. Every compassionate act makes large the world."



**Fire Watch***Brennan Lemar and Devon Patton, BSV*

It's hard to believe that we are already another month into the Fall 2021 semester. Our first meeting went well, there were a lot of great ideas that we hope we can move forward with as the year progresses. The most important item of note was that we have several new members in BSV and are excited to see what their experience and perspectives will bring to the organization. This is a trend that we hope continues throughout the year!

Our next meeting is on Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM in the Meadow Lark room of the Memorial Union. This meeting will be the start of something new for us in BSV as we will have Bill Burns from the NDSU Counseling Center as a guest speaker. We are interested to hear what Mr. Burns has to say about the resources and support available from the Counseling Center. We aim to continue to bring resources directly to NDSU's Student Veterans by featuring guest speakers at our monthly meetings. Our November meeting will feature Jerry South from the Career and Advising Center. If you or someone you know may be interested in speaking at one of our meetings, we encourage you to contact us.


We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff, faculty, and administrators that have committed to supporting student veterans at NDSU. It is your continued support that makes all of this possible for us.

**IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR STUDENT VETERANS**

BSV is a chapter of the national organization called [Student Veterans of America \(SVA\)](#). Currently, SVA has a network of over 1,500 campus chapters and serves as a hub for advancing student veteran research, initiatives, and opportunities. SVA hosts a number of programs and events to include a [Leadership Institute](#), [Regional Summits](#), and a [National Conference](#). In addition, they have a [Government Affairs](#) department that advises chapters about policy and provides Congressional testimony.

One of SVA's most powerful resources is its [Career Center](#) which provides a free resume tool ([VMock](#)) and mentoring through [Veterati](#) a free mentorship platform where Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses can access unlimited mentors. They also host an expansive career board which offers a [searchable international job platform](#) (by military titles, company, country, state, city and position title) that currently has [over 3.6 million job listings](#).

If you haven't explored their [site](#) yet, what are you waiting for??!!



## Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders

Through a network of more than 1,500 on-campus chapters, Student Veterans of America ensures that student veterans and military-connected students achieve their greatest potential.

LEARN MORE

*"One way to kill an opportunity is to avoid taking it." ~Jack Canfield*

# Career Corner

Jerry South, Assistant Director, Career Coaching, NDSU Career and Advising Center



Fall is quickly approaching and as we all know in this part of the country, winter is fast on its heels. The temps are ever fluctuating, the leaves are starting to turn colors, and it is getting time to swap out our wardrobe for some slightly warmer clothing. As the seasons start to change, it reminds me of when I retired from the Air Force. Not only did this bring on a wardrobe and climate change, but also a cultural change as I transitioned into civilian life. Unlike the seasonal changes, these life changes brought on some anxiety, fear, and frustration.

You may have, or currently are, experiencing something similar. This might not be solely related to your transition between military and civilian, but also changes such as: battlefield to classroom, full time student from full time worker, single to married, zoom to in-person, or employed to not employed...just to name a few.

The key to navigating these turbulent waters is to find ways to manage this stress. A few key ways that help me in these situations is to focus on what you can control. Such as studying; planning out and managing your time; setting goals...short and long term; and keeping your mind positive by looking to the benefits of the changes you are experiencing. Sometimes though, one cannot find a silver lining, so energy must be redirected toward some other form of stress relief such as exercise, social time, or whatever hobby you have that can take your mind off the stressors in your life. Personally, my military training set me up pretty good for dealing with these types of stressors so I was good to go there. However, my biggest problem was learning to ask for help. My independence and pride got in the way of my successful transition.

One example of an area that was very frustrating to me as retirement approached was looking for a job and interviewing. I sent out over 70 resumes to various companies and received zero interview requests. I started to think that I was never going to get a job and my family and I were going to be out on the streets. But instead of letting the stress get to me, I did some research and found out that it was because I was not tailoring my resumes to that particular job and was not de-militarizing my terminology on my resume. These are things within my control that I could change with a bit of help from the VA resources at my disposal. Once I corrected these areas, I started getting calls for interviews. Well, my interview skills were not up to par either, so I had to swallow my pride one more time and ask for help. After a few mock interviews and truly listening to some critical feedback from them, I was able to land my first civilian job.

As you start to prepare for the next season of your life, do yourself a favor and scope out the resources at your disposal. Don't worry what the person next to you thinks, don't worry if you feel others are judging you, if you have questions or need help...ASK. You don't have to go through this on your own.

## REACH OUT

EVEN VETERANS NEED SUPPORT SOMETIMES

REACH.gov/SPM



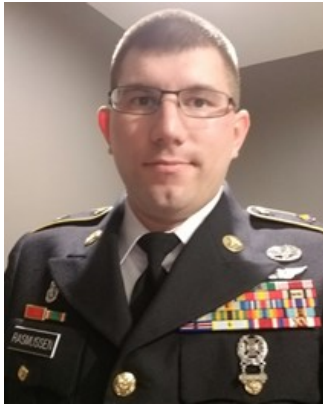
## Need food? We can help.

[NDSU Food Pantry](#)

**\$\$** Do you need money for an emergency? Check out [NDSU's Emergency Fund](#) for the types of life events that qualify for these funds—avg. \$50-\$500 (which do not need to be paid back).

[valor.veteran.alliance.organization/](https://valor.veteran.alliance.organization/)

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Updates from the Military and Veterans Certification Office:

Great news! After a rather bumpy start, certifications have stabilized and we are caught up with our GI Bill certifications. All students who have submitted certificates of eligibility or indicated they had applied for benefits have had their enrollment certification pushed to the VA. The vast majority of these cases should have been fully processed by the VA.

If you are receiving Chapter 1606 or Chapter 30 benefits, you must complete a monthly certification called WAVE to verify your attendance. The VA will not pay you until you do. You can complete this by visiting the VA website at <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do> or by calling 1-888-442-4551 (this phone number has recently changed and is experiencing some issues with the touch tone working at times, if the "file number" is requested, it is usually the servicemember's SSN). Starting this December, the VA plans to roll out a similar monthly certification process for CH 33 recipients but they have not

announced how it will be implemented yet.

We are also aware of an issue that is negatively impacting our Chapter 35 recipients. Many students using this benefit have not received payment from the VA yet. We believe this is due to the VA consolidating and eliminating one of their regional processing offices and shifting the workload to another location. Upon investigation, we verified that the students we checked on were all certified and sent on 8/20/21, but the VA had not processed payment as of 9/17/21. The State Approving Agency has been informed of this issue but the guidance I have received is it may not be investigated until 45 days after payment was originally due. A handful of students have received payment this week and others were able to receive payment by contacting the VA at 1-888-442-4551.

FTA: ArmyIgniteED is still not fully functional but we are making progress. The Army granted access to the website for our staff earlier last week and we will begin approving course planners. This is as far as we can process cases until the Army starts requesting invoices. They have assured us that as long as students create an account and "education pathway" they will receive an "ETP". (An IOU to NDSU from the Army that will be paid at a later date.)

Finally, Todd Yackley has been selected as the new Military and Veterans Representative for NDSU. He will be filling Scott Fuller's old position and we will finally have a full-time staff member. Todd has previously worked at NDSU and started in his new role on October 1<sup>st</sup>. We'll give him a chance to get settled and allow him to introduce himself in next month's newsletter.

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### *"I've just been activated, what do I do?"*

We have received reports that many students are being activated for various missions in the near future, here's what you need to do to get started.

**Step 1:** If you have military orders that will result in class absence, submit your orders to NDSU's official reporting system ([https://www.ndsu.edu/deanofstudents/student\\_advocacy/excused\\_absence\\_policy\\_and\\_notifications/](https://www.ndsu.edu/deanofstudents/student_advocacy/excused_absence_policy_and_notifications/)) and the university will notify all your instructors for you.

**Step 2:** Decide what path you wish to take. You may have a short activation that requires a simple adjustment of an assignment date, or you may be going overseas and need to drop all your courses for a year. It is important to know your options, rights, and responsibilities. A summary of options can be found here: <https://www.ndsu.edu/veterans/activation/>.

**Step 3:** If you want us to assist you with answering faculty questions after they have been officially notified of your orders, provide a copy of your orders to the NDSU Veteran's Office email at [ndsu.veterans@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsu.veterans@ndsu.edu).

**Step 4:** Take action and follow through. Make sure you complete all the steps thoroughly on our handy pre-deployment checklist: <https://www.ndsu.edu/veterans/deployment/>.

**Step 5:** Once you return from your mission you will need to reenroll as a student at NDSU. Instructions for the process can be found at: <https://www.ndsu.edu/veterans/enrollment/>. Contact the Military and Veterans Certification Office at 701-231-7985 or email [ndsu.veterans@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsu.veterans@ndsu.edu) to let us know you are back and we'll help you get your



## COMING UP

**October**

U.S. Navy Birthday	October 13
Day of the Deployed	October 26

**November**

National Family Caregivers Month	Month of Nov.
Warrior Care Month	
National Veterans & Mil. Family Month	
National Veterans Small Bus. Week	November 1-5
Marine Corps Birthday	November 10
Veterans Day	November 11
Armistice/Remembrance Day	November 11

**December**

Civil Air Patrol Birthday	December 1
Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	December 7
U.S. National Guard Day	December 13
National Wreaths Across America	December 18

**Connect Locally via Facebook****NDDVA**

[facebook.com/NDDVA/](https://facebook.com/NDDVA/)

**DAV North Dakota**

[facebook.com/davnorthdakota/](https://facebook.com/davnorthdakota/)

**American Legion Post 2**

[facebook.com/americanlegionpost2/](https://facebook.com/americanlegionpost2/)

**American Legion Post 21**

[facebook.com/legionpost21/](https://facebook.com/legionpost21/)

**North Dakota American Legion**

[facebook.com/NDAmericanLegion/](https://facebook.com/NDAmericanLegion/)

**Dilworth VFW Post 1223**

[facebook.com/VFW-Post-1223-106022496155155/](https://facebook.com/VFW-Post-1223-106022496155155/)

**Fargo VFW Post 762**

[facebook.com/fargovfwclub/](https://facebook.com/fargovfwclub/)

**West Fargo VFW Post 7564**

[facebook.com/VFW7564.org/](https://facebook.com/VFW7564.org/)

**North Dakota Veterans Educational Training**

[facebook.com/VeteransEducationalTraining/](https://facebook.com/VeteransEducationalTraining/)

**Bison Student Veterans**

[facebook.com/BisonVeterans](https://facebook.com/BisonVeterans)

**VALOR**

[facebook.com/valor.veteran.alliance.organization/](https://facebook.com/valor.veteran.alliance.organization/)

**Local Events**

On **Monday, Oct 18<sup>th</sup>** (and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month): **Free, walk-in legal clinic** to help low-income veterans with civil legal matters. **1-4 PM** at the Fargo VA's Community Resource and Referral Center. Note: this service is not at the VA hospital; the CRRC is on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N in downtown Fargo, next to the Federal Court-house.

The **Veterans Mental Health Conference**, sponsored by the Fargo Vet Center and the Veterans Warrior Foundation, will be held **Friday, Oct 29<sup>th</sup>**, at the Holiday Inn (13<sup>th</sup> Ave S) in Fargo. This all-day conference is focused on helping civilian mental health providers understand military culture and other issues in order to better treat veteran patients. 6 CEU credits will be awarded. For more information contact the Fargo Vet Center: (701) 237-0942.

On **Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**, from **6-8 PM** at the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead, MN, attend the **Veterans' Performance Showcase**. You can also view the **Warriors in the North: Healing Through the Arts Exhibit** at the Hjemkomst Center between October 6, 2021 and March 6, 2022. More information about these events can be found here: <https://www.hcscconline.org/warriors.html>

On **Thursday, November 18<sup>th</sup>**, from **12-1 PM**, NDSU's "Including U" discussion series will host (on Zoom) a **panel discussion on Veteran Perspectives on Campus**. These sessions are open to all of the NDSU community: faculty, staff, and students. Panel participants are TBD. <https://ndsu.zoom.us/j/97428576932?pwd=aEJ6K1Y4NINDUm1BQXJiY04yR21EZz09>.

**Free flu shots** are available at the Fargo VA Medical Center (2101 Elm St. N) for vets enrolled in VA Health Care (if you're not enrolled, or have questions about eligibility, ask Jim Stoddard).

- **Oct. 6 from 8 AM-2 PM** via drive-through (follow the signs).
- **Oct. 13 and 19 from 8 AM-3 PM** in the third-floor auditorium.
- **Oct. 5 and 12 from 4-6 PM** in the first-floor primary care department.

*Freedom is never free.*



Starting your own business? Check out [Warrior Rising](#) for free support for you and your family.

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**Hispanic Americans Serve with Distinction and Contribute to Our Nation's Defense****Craig Schwinden**

As with any special group or population in the 'melting pot' we know as the United States, Hispanic Americans have their place and have made their mark in our society while making America a better place to live. These contributions have been in art, music, medicine, and many other areas. In addition, throughout U.S. history, Hispanic Americans have served their country with honor and bravery. In acknowledgement of Hispanic Heritage Month, VALOR would like to recognize three of our fellow service members of Hispanic descent that have served with distinction.

**Marcelino Serna**

Marcelino Serna emigrated to the United States from Mexico in 1916. While working in Texas, Selma was stopped by federal authorities who wished to verify his draft status. Upon discovering he was an undocumented immigrant, these authorities tried to deport him. Serna, wishing to become a naturalized U.S. citizen, demonstrated his wish by offering to be allowed to enlist in the U.S. Army. His request was approved since there were not many volunteers for infantry duty in the Army.



Pvt. Marcelino Serna  
U.S. Army  
(Photo courtesy of USCIS)

Upon finishing his basic training, Serna was shipped to Europe for action on the Western Front in France. While engaging German troops, Serna noticed a wounded German soldier. He followed this soldier back to his trench, where Serna attacked using his rifle and hand grenades killing 26 German soldiers and capturing another 24. Allied Expeditionary Forces (AEF) commander General John J. Pershing awarded Serna the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) making him the first Hispanic American to be awarded the DSC. Later, the Supreme Allied commander, French Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch awarded Serna the French "Croix de Guerre" (translation: 'Cross of War').

After the war, Serna returned to Texas and settled in El Paso. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1924. On February 29th, 1992, Private Serna passed away. He was buried with full military honors at Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso. There is currently an effort underway to award Serna the Medal of Honor.

**Carmen Contreras-Bozak**

Back in the 1940s, Hispanic women, like other women, were discouraged from assuming roles outside of their "domestic" responsibilities, even within their own community! Carmen Contreras-Bozak thought her duty to her country was more important than a domesticated lifestyle. The Puerto Rican woman, who lived in New York City, decided to enlist in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (later to be known as the Women's Air Corps or "WACs"). She thus became the first Hispanic American woman to do so.

During the second World War, the War Department specifically recruited Hispanic women to serve in cryptology, communications, and interpretation jobs. Contreras-Bozak volunteered for duty in North Africa where the duty was extraordinarily dangerous, as female servicemembers were not treated the same as male servicemembers. This was critical as women did not have the same protections accorded their male counterparts under international law if captured.

Upon her arrival in North Africa, Contreras-Bozak was assigned to the Signal Corps and decoded messages between General Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters in Tunisia and the battlefield in Algiers. She continued in this role despite repeated German attacks against *(continued on page 10)*



Carmen Contreras-Bozak  
Technical Sergeant  
U.S. Women's Army Corps  
(WACs)  
(Photo courtesy of VA)

### Hispanic Americans Serve with Distinction and Contribute to Our Nation's Defense *(Continued from page 9)*

Eisenhower's headquarters until an infection forced her to a stateside hospital. During her service, she received the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, two Battle Stars, a World War II Victory Medal, an American Campaign Medal, a WAAC Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. In her final years, Contreras-Bozak founded a chapter of the Society of Military Widows. Carmen Contreras-Bozak passed away on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the age of 97. She was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

#### Richard Edward Cavazos



General Richard E. Cavazos  
U.S. Army  
*(Photo courtesy of U.S. Army)*

Richard E. Cavazos, a Mexican American, was born in Kingsville, Texas, and served in the U.S. Army for 33 years. He served in combat tours in both the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War. He was decorated for actions in both conflicts and later, became the first Hispanic American to be promoted to the rank of four-star general.

While serving in Korea, Cavazos, in command of 'E' Company, 2d Battalion, 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division distinguished himself in action against an enemy force on the night of June 14, 1953. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) in this action. The citation reads, "(Then-) Lieutenant Cavazos led his men in a raid on the entrenched enemy position. Lieutenant Cavazos three times led the company through a heavy barrage in assaults on the enemy position, each time destroying vital enemy equipment and personnel. When the United Nations element was ordered to withdraw, Lieutenant Cavazos remained alone on the enemy outpost to search the area for missing men. Exposed to heavy hostile fire, Lieutenant Cavazos located five men who had been wounded in the action. He evacuated them, one at a time, to a point on the reverse slope of the hill from which they could be removed to the safety of the friendly lines."

In Vietnam, then-Lieutenant Colonel Cavazos was in command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. On October 30, 1967, LtC Cavazos' battalion was executing search & destroy operations near Loc Nihn. When one of his companies began receiving heavy fire from a Viet Cong battalion in well-entrenched positions on the slope of a hill, LtC Cavazos immediately led his other elements forward and engaged the enemy forces. Constantly exposed to savage hostile fire and shrapnel from exploding grenades, he moved among his troops directing a counterattack. As the Viet Cong broke contact and fled to the hillside, LtC Cavazos called for air strikes and artillery fire on the crest of the hill to cut off the insurgents' line of retreat. Fighting reached such close quarters that he completely disregarded his own safety and personally led a determined assault to destroy the remaining positions.

Later in his career, Cavazos made history by becoming the first Hispanic American to achieve the rank of General when he pinned on his fourth star in 1982. Later that same year, he was instrumental in the theory, development, and creation of the National Military Center at Ford Irwin located in San Bernadino County, California. That installation is still used today to train multiple services of our Armed Forces in armored, desert, urban, and insurgent warfare. General Cavazos passed away on October 29, 2017. He was buried with full military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas.

VALOR salutes our Hispanic American brothers and sisters during their month of recognition. We also continue to honor, respect, and salute all our fellow veterans and service members regardless of race, color, sex, or creed. We thank you all for your service to our country.



*"Preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures."  
~Cesar Chavez*