

# VALOR

VETERAN ★ ALLIANCE

May 2021

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Colleagues and friends,

It is a bittersweet time of year. With NDSU's Spring 2021 Commencement upon us, we will be celebrating student success and watching them move on to their next life adventure. And while we are thrilled for their accomplishment, we will also miss the opportunity to see them in our classes and spend time with them at campus and community events.

But such is the cycle at NDSU, they are only with us for a short time and then they are off to put their education to good use. Each year there is a new group of students and other classes of students one year closer to graduation. It is predictable and magical at the same time.



At commencement there will be tears and laughter, relief and trepidation, and a whole lot of hopes and dreams. This is the culmination of a life experience like no other. Our graduates have reached a milestone that required focus, determination, and commitment and as they prepare to close this chapter of their life we wish them future success and happiness.

VALOR would like to extend special congratulations to student veterans graduating this spring and summer. The realization of these graduates' educational goals is particularly poignant to us as the attainment of their educational goals underpins our mission. We have had the privilege of working with many of this year's graduates, but the one who is top of mind is Chase Tozer who sits on the VALOR Advisory Board and has been writing BSV's column for many months. NDSU recently featured Chase in a piece focused on 10 of the Spring 2021 graduates (check it out [here](#)). He will be missed and we wish him the best.



This is our last newsletter for the 2020-21 academic year. We hope you have found value in the material in our monthly editions. Our newsletter will resume in the fall. All past editions of the newsletter can be found on VALOR's Resources for Allies page.

If you have any student veteran questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me or Jim Stoddard. As always, thank you all for your commitment to VALOR and our student veterans at NDSU. Have a lovely and safe summer.

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





**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).



Jim will be in the office throughout the summer. Don't hesitate to reach out to him if you have any questions or need assistance.

Also, stay tuned for VALOR/VET events coming up this fall.



First, some real academic success to report! We have 75 military NDSU students with expected graduations of spring or summer 2021! For comparison, there were only 52 military students with “degree awarded” spring or summer 2020. Of those 75 graduates, 58 (77%!) currently show a GPA of 3.0 or higher, with three carrying a perfect 4.0!

Bison Student Veterans have resumed the tradition of awarding a red, white, and blue honor cord to those military graduates with 3.0 or higher GPA, so watch for those cords at graduation, and congratulate the wearers if you get a chance! Speaking of the BSV, let's congratulate them on winning two HUGE awards from NDSU's Student Activities Office: Student Organization of the Year, and the Community Impact award for 2021!

This spring, we'll resume holding our VET Horsemanship program at the NDSU Equine Center. The goal of this course is to help college-bound veterans (or those that have been unsuccessful) develop personal skills needed for college success in a fun and unconventional way. This course is all grooming and groundwork (no riding), but aims to build confidence in stepping out of one's comfort zone, as well as improving self-awareness and empathy. The emotional connections made with these wonderful animals can refresh a veteran's ability to connect with humans in the classroom. There is no cost to participate in this six week course (5/27—7/1) that meets weekly on Thursday mornings from 9 – 11 AM. If you know a student veteran that might be a good fit for this program or want more information, please let me know.

Veteran space enhancement update: The NDSU Student Government Campus Improvement Project grant funds have now been transferred to my account and the purchase of the four ergonomic study pods is finally proceeding! We expect them to arrive around the end of June. Once they're here, we'll invite you all to come take a look and try them out.

Also in the veteran computer lab in Ceres Hall, we've installed (and successfully tested) a couple Common Access Card (CAC) readers. Military students can now log on and digitally sign military documents, like travel vouchers and performance reports, quickly and conveniently from campus. This prevents the need to scrounge up a CAC reader from somewhere, make a special trip out to their military work center, or wait in long lines on drill weekends for a CAC-enabled computer. Students can authenticate and make changes to military personnel and medical records securely whenever needed.

I hope you've seen the three articles that NDSU University Relations that highlighted a few of our students currently serving in the National Guard. If you missed them, see NDSU's “Campus News” web page: [ndsu.edu/news/](https://ndsu.edu/news/). Through this series, you can learn about these students roles in responding to current national challenges and the way those experiences benefit them (and the rest of us) back on campus.

Presentations from the 2021 NASPA Symposium on Military-Connected Students are now posted on the VET website: [ndsu.edu/vet/ally\\_training\\_and\\_information/](https://ndsu.edu/vet/ally_training_and_information/). Topics cover a range of subjects related to understanding and supporting military students. We're still working on getting the recordings for the most recent VITAL program webinars. I hope to eventually have them posted at this same link.

You may have heard about recent changes signed into law for students negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In short, most of these changes are to restore/extend benefits for students whose institutions closed, program cancelled, or converted to all online format because of the pandemic. Generally, none of that happened at NDSU, so there's likely no changes applicable to our students. Students with questions about their military education benefits should contact Scott Fuller, NDSU's VA Certifying Official at (701) 231-7985 or via e-mail at [ndsu.veterans@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsu.veterans@ndsu.edu). Of course, I am always happy to answer your questions as well.



## Veteran's Voice

*Craig Schwinden*

*VALOR Student Veteran Representative*

Hello Student Vets,

Well, it looks like we have survived another semester under COVID-19. However, the feeling is certainly different. It now looks like we are putting the pandemic behind us. Summer jobs and internships are being filled. Based on my searches, fewer and fewer of them are online home-based positions. The weather is turning warmer and we have another summer right around the corner. For those of you graduating, congratulations and best of luck to you. Hopefully, the job market will

continue to rebound and you will have early success in your job hunt.

That being said, let's stay focused and get through these last couple of weeks. As I write this, we are a couple of days away from dead week and then finals. I think the world and the people in it are ready to jump out of their shoes and start living again, but we should stay cognizant of the tasks at hand. These tasks are to finish this semester strong and take care of ourselves and each other.

The month of May is Military Appreciation Month and there are several key days to observe this month. Please keep these important days of acknowledgement, honor, and remembrance in your mind - Military Spouses Day, Armed Forces Day/Week, and of course, Memorial Day. Let us not forget what these days are set aside for. You can learn more about some of these dates in the Military Appreciation Month article (pg. 7). I recom-

mend starting with your local veteran service organizations.

Speaking of military awareness, this month's Student Veteran of the Month comes to us from the North Dakota Air National Guard's 119th Wing right here in Fargo. Staff Sergeant Brennan Lemar comes to North Dakota State University from nearby West Fargo, ND. He is the vice-president elect of our own Bison Student Veterans and ready to do his part to advance that organization's goals here on campus. Be sure to check out SSgt. Lemar's profile in this issue.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, comments, or article ideas at [craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu](mailto:craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu). Stay focused, stay healthy and finish strong. Thank you for your service and bless you.



## Warriors of the North

Fargo Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care System and the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County in Moorhead, MN, are partnering on a creative art exhibit with a series of public events featuring local veterans' journey in trauma recovery. These events will be held in the fall and winter of 2021 and 2022. **Veterans interested in becoming involved in this effort are currently being sought.**

- **A mask making event will be held on May 26, 1-4 PM at the Fargo VA Medical Center.** Veterans interested in participating should call Dr. Margo Norton of the Fargo VA HCS, at (701) 239-3700, extension 3150.
- **A veterans writing workshop series, led by veteran facilitator Wendell Affield will be held this summer.** A virtual series will be offered Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, July 31<sup>st</sup> over zoom from 2-4 PM. The in-person series will be offered Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, August 14<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 PM. Veterans interested in participating in either workshop series should contact Amy Tichy at (218) 766-8795 or [amy.tichy@gmail.com](mailto:amy.tichy@gmail.com).
- **A local veteran artist is recruiting for veterans from all wars who have experienced military trauma and would be willing to sit for a photo shoot, while sharing their military experiences.** Veterans interested in participating should contact Dr. Ken Andersen at (701) 371-4735 or [k.andersen.studio@gmail.com](mailto:k.andersen.studio@gmail.com).
- **A local veteran musician is looking for veterans interested in being paired with local songwriters, and local musicians who would like to be paired with a veteran to assist in putting a difficult military experience or trauma to words and music.** Veterans interested in participating should contact Dan Hudson at (701) 306- 6870 or [dthuddy73@gmail.com](mailto:dthuddy73@gmail.com).

*\*Facilities are wheel-chair accessible and ASL interpreters and audio-describers can be arranged for participants with two weeks' notice. If you would like to request services, please email [Maureen.jonason@HCSmuseum.org](mailto:Maureen.jonason@HCSmuseum.org).*





Name: Brennan A. Lemar

Major/Minor: Biological Sciences with an emphasis in Biomedical and a Minor in Chemistry

Originally from: West Fargo, ND

Current city: Barnesville, MN

Career plans after college: After graduation I plan to attend the University of North Dakota to pursue a graduate degree while continuing to serve in the North Dakota Air National Guard.

Military service: I joined the 119th Happy Hooligans Security Forces Squadron in the North Dakota Air National Guard in July of 2014. I am currently an Active Guard Reserve member where I work full-time at the 119th Wing in Fargo. I deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in 2017 and have also had the privilege of serving North Dakota through various state activations.

NDSU activities/engagement: I have been a member of the Bison Student Veterans organization (BSV) since January of 2019 and have been elected as the Vice-President for the 2021-2022 school year. I am also an active member in the NDSU Pre-Med Club and American Medical Student Association and Allied Health Group on campus.

Community activities/engagement: I have been a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician since 2018 and am a volunteer with the Barnesville Ambulance Service.

An interesting tidbit about the veteran: My preferred hobby is spending time at the lake with my wife and three children during the summer.

Favorite experience/memories/etc. at NDSU: My favorite experience at NDSU is participating in BSV with our fantastic group of professional student leaders and advocating for our student veterans and current military members at NDSU. They are truly passionate about our university and community and bring a great deal of experience and inspiration.

## CALL TO ACTION: **RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES**

It has been a very long year and we are all tired. As vaccination numbers go up and restrictions are lifted, we can start to imagine a life that looks a bit more like our lives pre-pandemic. We will still see masks, but we will also see more people getting back to activities they have missed during the pandemic. The vaccine has given us the ability to move forward with hope.

**The call to action this to month is to recharge your batteries.** Get out, stay in, do whatever it is that allows you to let go of the stress of the year and replenish and recenter yourself. Chronic stress can do a great deal of damage to your health and wellbeing. Recognize that unplugging from work and other stressors is essential to recharging your batteries. It isn't selfish, impractical, or irresponsible to devote time to yourself - it is self-care. So recharge today so you are better able to deal with whatever else life hands you next. And from us (VALOR) to you - take good care.



**The Drop Zone: Delivering BSV news “on-time, on-target”**

*Chase Tozer, BSV Vice President*

The end is near! I first want to start off by saying congratulations to all the students who have completed their studies and are moving from NDSU to graduate school or a career beyond. We have been through some trying times, but not once did I doubt that we would have an incredible representation. It shows our character and strength when it is needed most.



We started off April with our annual elections! We are happy to announce that four candidates won officer seats. We are going to have some great representatives next year! Please welcome - Devon Patton (President), Brennan Lemar (Vice-President), McKinnon Carlson (Treasurer), and Karlee Kaylor (Event Coordinator).



Chase Tozer

NDSU’s University Relations has been extremely helpful in spreading the word of what our National Guardsmen are doing in response to events around the country. In showing our support, we are sharing those stories as much as we can to highlight the delicate balance they contend with, succeeding in school and accomplishing the mission. We continue to support those individuals and will look to connect with NDSU’s Counseling Center for help with that transition back and forth. If you have any experience in helping with these events, please reach out. It is not in our nature as veterans to be incredibly public, but we are proud to call you colleagues and fellow students of NDSU. The Student Voice Project is wrapping up. The new administration will be reaching out to see if there is interest within the organization to participate.

On a personal note, this will be my last update as the Vice-President of the Bison Student Veterans. It has been my pleasure to help establish this group from nothing and to see the exponential progress it has made. When I originally responded to the email from Jim, I had one goal in mind: to make just one student’s life easier as they transition from the military or balance both student and service member status. I hope to continue to fight for deserved veteran issues at NDSU and stay in contact with BSV and VALOR. Please don’t hesitate to reach out. Stay the course and reach out to me if needed.

**COMING UP**

**May**

Month of the Military Caretaker	Month of May
National Military Appreciation Month	Month of May
Silver Star Service Banner Day	May 1
VE Day	May 8
Children of Fallen Patriots Day	May 13
Armed Forces Day	May 15
Memorial Day	May 31

**June**

PTSD Awareness Month	Month of June
D-Day	June 6
Women Veterans Day	June 12
Army Birthday	June 14
U.S. Flag Day	June 14
Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday	June 23
PTSD Awareness Day	June 27

**July**

Independence Day	July 4
National Hire A Veteran Day	July 25
National Korean War Veterans	
Armistice Day	July 27
National Buffalo Soldiers Day	July 28
Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary	July 29

**August**

Air Force Day	August 1
Coast Guard Day	August 4
Purple Heart Day	August 7
U.S. Department of Defense Birthday	August 10
Agent Orange Awareness Day	August 10
Navajo Code Talkers Day	August 14
National Airborne Day	August 16
Marine Corps Reserve Birthday	August 29

**NDSU Commencement: May 15<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM and 2 PM at the Fargodome (tickets and face masks required). For more details, see [ndsu.edu/commencement/](https://ndsu.edu/commencement/). Congrats graduates!**



#NDSU  
#graduating  
#youdidit

## Career Corner

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



We all know the military is full of acronyms and specialized jargon. The military is like so many other industries that have their own 'language' that only those embedded in those fields of work can understand without an explanation. When you start applying to civilian jobs, being able to accurately express yourself is going to be extremely important. I learned this the hard way when I was retiring from the Air Force. I worked so hard on my resume and interviewing skills that I thought for sure I would be hired right away. Well, over seventy applications and only a few horrifically bad interviews later, I realized I needed help. With guidance from my Transition Assistance technician on base, I was able to 'demilitarize' my resume and interviewing language. I started resubmitting for jobs which led to getting calls for interviews and ultimately starting a second career.

You all do, or have done, amazing work in your military service to our great country. My guess is quite a few of you have been recognized for those efforts by your unit commanders and supervisors for that work as well. Now, as you seek civilian employment opportunities, you need to find a way to express those accomplishments, your military roles, and your transferable skills to a those employers. The key is to not only do this on your resume, but also during the interview. To be successful in this process, you will need to do some homework on equivalent civilian terms and language that will help you talk about your experience in a way that is easier for an employer to understand.

There are several resources you can use to do this. One is [careeronestop.org](https://careeronestop.org) which provides suggestions for you using common military terms and acronyms, and common job titles. It also provides a job search tool that can help match civilian jobs to your military one. Other resources are your local VA offices, and yes you guessed it, the NDSU Career and Advising Center. We can conduct resume and cover letter reviews to help you make sure your documents are easy to understand. We do this by sitting down with you one on one or virtually, asking questions about your military background and making sure the wording lines up with the job description you are applying to. We also assist by conducting mock interviews so you can practice talking about your military experience to help ensure you are articulating your experience in a way that not only is easily understood, but represents your skills in a way that will hopefully maximize your success in that civilian job.

You are highly skilled individuals with talents and experiences that can bring great value to an employer. So be sure you are not being overlooked for a job simply because your wording isn't right. This isn't always easy to do, but the translation from military to civilian terminology is very important to your future success and will be well worth the time and energy you put into it. Those whom serve are the proud and the few, but we don't have to do this next chapter alone. Use the veteran services that are out there to your advantage. We are all in this together and want to see each other succeed.

### LEADERSHIP: THIS IS HOW IT IS DONE!



Bravo to Bison Student Veterans (BSV) for winning two coveted awards at the Bison Leadership Awards (sponsored and awarded by NDSU's Student Organizations). BSV received the Community Impact Award and the Student Organization of the Year Award at a ceremony held in April.

These awards, which recognize the commitment BSV members have shown to the BSV's growth and contributions on campus and their impact on the larger community, honor all the hard work BSV members have put in serving student veterans and creating a welcoming environment on campus for those who serve and have served. We could not be more proud of them or the organization they have built and nurtured.

*"Better to fight for something than live for nothing." ~ General George S. Patton*



**Military Appreciation Month****Craig Schwinden**

May is one of the most important months on the calendar for military members, their spouses, and separated or retired veterans. The most obvious reason is Memorial Day, the day set aside to honor America's war dead. In 2021, Memorial Day will be observed on Monday, May 31st with services, remembrances, and speeches. However, this is not the only day honoring service-related persons as May is also Military Appreciation Month in the United States.



In 1999, the late Senator John McCain of Arizona, sensing that the Memorial Day holiday weekend had become another three-day weekend that had lost its original purpose and focus, introduced legislation naming May as National Military Appreciation Month and both houses of Congress quickly approved Senator McCain's proposal. Since then, other special populations related to the military have become part of this cherished month. Some of the holidays for the month of May include (2021):

**May 1st – Loyalty Day**

Loyalty Day kicks off our Nation's month-long celebration of military appreciation. It is a day set aside for the reaffirmation of loyalty to the United States, and to reflect on the proud heritage of our American freedom

**May 7th – Military Spouses Day**

A day to honor military spouses with appropriate ceremonies and activities. Recognizes the important role our military families play in keeping our Armed Forces strong and our country safe.

**May 8th – VE Day**

This commemorates Victory in Europe Day. Celebrates the day Germany signed the instrument of surrender which ended hostilities in Europe during World War II.

**May 15th – Armed Forces Day**

A single holiday for citizens to come together and thank our military members for their patriotic service in support of our country. This day honors everyone serving in the U.S. Military branches. The Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, and Space Force. In most locations, Armed Forces Day is a culmination of Armed Forces Week which usually includes week-long activities (8th thru 15th, 2021) and celebrations wrapped up on Armed Forces Day.

**May 31st – Memorial Day**

This day is to commemorate the men and women who died while in military service. All Americans are encouraged to pause, wherever they are, at 3:00 PM local time for a minute of silence.

Watch for information from local veteran organizations in our area as they will plan events and commemorate a lot of these days. Not only are they solemn and honorable, they can also be a great opportunity to get together with other veterans and those who support veterans.



**Looking for vacation ideas?** How about seeing some of the [top 100 military sites](#) in America? From museums to historical sites, you can traverse the country with a great list of options. Check out the list [here](#) and start making plans. Have fun and don't forget to send us a postcard!

*Enjoy the warm weather!*