

Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife) Available Now!

Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife) provides low-cost coverage to Veterans with service-connected disabilities. Find out if you're eligible and how to apply.



Eligibility for VALife

If you're age 80 or younger

You're eligible for VALife if you have a VA service-connected disability rating—even if your rating is 0%.

There's no time limit to apply after getting your disability rating.

If you're age 81 or older

You may be eligible for VALife if you meet these requirements.

All of these must be true:

- You applied for VA disability compensation before you turned 81 years old, **and**
- You got your service-connected disability rating after you turned 81, **and**
- You apply for VALife within **2 years** of getting notification of your disability rating

Benefits you can get with VALife

You can get these benefits:

- Up to \$40,000 in whole life insurance coverage (in \$10,000 increments), **and**
- Cash value that starts to add up 2 years after we approve your application

VALife is guaranteed acceptance whole life insurance. This means that if you meet the eligibility requirements for VALife, we'll automatically approve your application. You won't need to prove you're in good health. And you can keep your coverage for the rest of your life.

When your benefits will start

Your full life insurance coverage starts **2 years** after you apply. You must pay the premiums during those 2 years.

Here's what you need to know about the 2-year waiting period:

- If you die during the 2-year waiting period, we'll pay your beneficiaries the total amount you paid in premiums, plus interest. Beneficiaries are the people you pick to get the money from your life insurance policy if you die.
- If you die after the 2-year waiting period, we'll pay your beneficiaries the full coverage amount of your policy.

How much you'll pay for VALife

Your premium depends on your age when you apply and the amount of coverage you want. Your premium rate will never increase as long as you keep your VALife policy.

If more than **6 months** have passed since your last birthday, the VA considers you 1 year older when determining your premium rate. For example, if you're 59 years and 6 months and 1 day old, you'll pay the rate for age 60.

You can call the VA Life Insurance Center at [800-669-8477](tel:800-669-8477) ([TTY: 711](tel:711)) from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET. if you have further questions.

[Learn More About VALife](#)

**Trailblazers: The Women in Our Ranks Making History
Today**



**First female Marine to graduate
IOC and lead an Infantry Platoon:
*First Lt. Marina A. Hierl***

by [Andrea Scott](#) (*Marine Corps Times*,
August 10, 2018)

[A female Marine infantry
officer](#) made history in September
2017 when she became the first
woman to graduate from the Marine
Corps' backbreaking Infantry Officer
Course.

Raised in Pennsylvania where she
worked on a horse farm, Hierl told
the Times she decided to join the
Corps after she was steered into
college at University of Southern
California.



**First female platoon to graduate a
Marine Corps bootcamp in
San Diego, CA**

by Scottie Andrew
(*CNN*, May 07, 2021)

Pfc. Katey Hogan was a recruit with
the groundbreaking Platoon 3241.
She and the 52 other women recruits
didn't take their history-making
training lightly, she said -- it
motivated her to perform at her best.

Until recently, the two training depots
were largely segregated by gender:
Companies of women trained at the
recruit depot in [Parris Island, South
Carolina](#), and men trained either in
South Carolina or San Diego, but not

“I wanted to do something important with my life,” she told the Times. “I wanted to be part of a group of people that would be willing to die for each other.”

Hierl told the Times she vividly remembers in 2013 when it was announced that women could vie for combat roles.

“I wanted to lead a platoon,” she said. “I didn’t think there was anything better in the Marine Corps I could do.”

Read more about her experience, click [here](#).

concurrently with the women recruits. A coed company first trained together at Parris Island in 2019, [CNN reported](#) at the time.

"This graduation of the first integrated company of Marines trained here at MCRD San Diego marks the completion of the first step toward a future in which [each Marine](#) who graduates MCRD San Diego has the same experience as their peers at Parris Island," said Brig. Gen. Ryan P. Heritage, commanding general of MCRD San Diego, in a statement.

Read more about their experience [here](#).

Financial Assistance Support for Post-9/11 New York Veterans and their Families



Financial assistance support for post-9/11 New York veterans and their families

We believe warriors can thrive with access to integrated services focused on their individual and collective well-being.

Critical Needs Program

Hope For the Warriors Critical Needs program serves as a short-term financial bridge for post 9/11 veterans and their families, and for survivors of traumas as they navigate through long-term recovery.

Support includes financial education and financial assistance to help offset income loss due to:

- Delays in disability claims processing
- Combat related loss of income
- Homelessness and homeless prevention
- Increased care due to injury progression
- Housing support for veteran to engage in intensive outpatient and/or inpatient psychiatric treatment for PTSD, MST, depression, anxiety, or equivalent mental health diagnoses
- Assistance in the form of financial grants, resource referrals, supportive counseling and financial literacy training



To learn more about these services visit hopeforthewarriors.org/connect-to-services

For questions, please contact: jsooklal@hopeforthewarriors.org



This program is supported by a grant from The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation.

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers, bolster the health outcomes of vulnerable communities, eliminate barriers to care, and bridge gaps in health services. Named after a tireless advocate for immigrants, children, and the poor, the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation funds programs and initiatives across New York State that either provide direct healthcare services or address the social determinants of health. For more information, visit www.cabrinihealth.org.

Honoring Women in Service: The Piestewa Challenge



SAVE THE DATE • MARCH 23-29

REGISTER

- Build your team of 8 participants
- Scan the QR code, download the racery app, or visit <https://racery.com/r/piestewa/>



RUN

- Between March 23-29, collectively move 177 miles to honor the 177 women killed in combat operations since 9/11.

REMEMBER

- Remember our fallen female service members and honor those still serving today
- Tag your photos #piestewachallenge #wearblueruntoremember

wear blue:
run to remember® 

www.wearblueruntoremember.org/piestewa-challenge

This March, in conjunction with Women's History month, *wear blue* honors the service and sacrifice of our nation's more than 400,000 currently serving female Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines, and Guardians currently serving our nation for a purpose greater than themselves, and the generations who walked before them.

wear blue will close the month with a powerful community effort, called **The Piestewa Challenge**, to honor the 177 women who have given their lives in our continued combat operations around the globe. This effort is named in honor of SPC Lori Piestewa; SPC Piestewa is the first American Indian service member to be killed in combat on foreign soil, as well as the first female service

member killed in Iraq. Launching on 23 March 2023, the 20th anniversary of SPC Piestewa's sacrifice, **wear blue** invites the community to create teams (of 4-8) and collectively run 177 miles through 29 March, to honor the lives of the 177 women killed in action* in the Global War on Terror.

Each step will honor the women who made the ultimate sacrifice, celebrate the women who were willing to make such sacrifices, and unite our community with a shared effort of purpose, health, and connection.

To learn more about SPC Piestewa's story, click [here](#).

The Neon Nutrition Kitchen: Veteran-Only Pantry Days

Attention NYC Veterans! [The NeON Nutrition Kitchen](#) will be hosting Veterans-only Pantry days on Staten Island and The Bronx, providing non-perishable foods as well as a meat/fish to Veterans and their families.

There will also be a Veterans Benefit Coordinator on site to help with claims and benefits.



The NeON Nutrition Kitchen

FREE HEALTHY FOODS

WHAT NeON Nutrition Kitchen Veterans Only Day
Free Packaged Groceries, Produce and Dairy

WHEN Every Friday - 10am to 1pm
from March 3 - May 26

WHERE
Staten Island
340 Bay Street



For requests regarding accessibility or language interpretation services please email disabilityfacilitator@probation.nyc.gov or call 212-510-3862.



The NeON Nutrition Kitchen

FREE HEALTHY FOODS

WHAT NeON Nutrition Kitchen Veterans Only Day
Free Packaged Groceries, Produce and Dairy

WHEN Every Monday - 9:30am to 12:30pm
from March 13 - June 6

WHERE
Bronx
198 East 161st 10451



For requests regarding accessibility or language interpretation services please email disabilityfacilitator@probation.nyc.gov or call 212-510-3862.

Staten Island:

📅 Fridays, March 3 - May 26

📍 340 Bay Street

🕒 10a-1p

The Bronx:

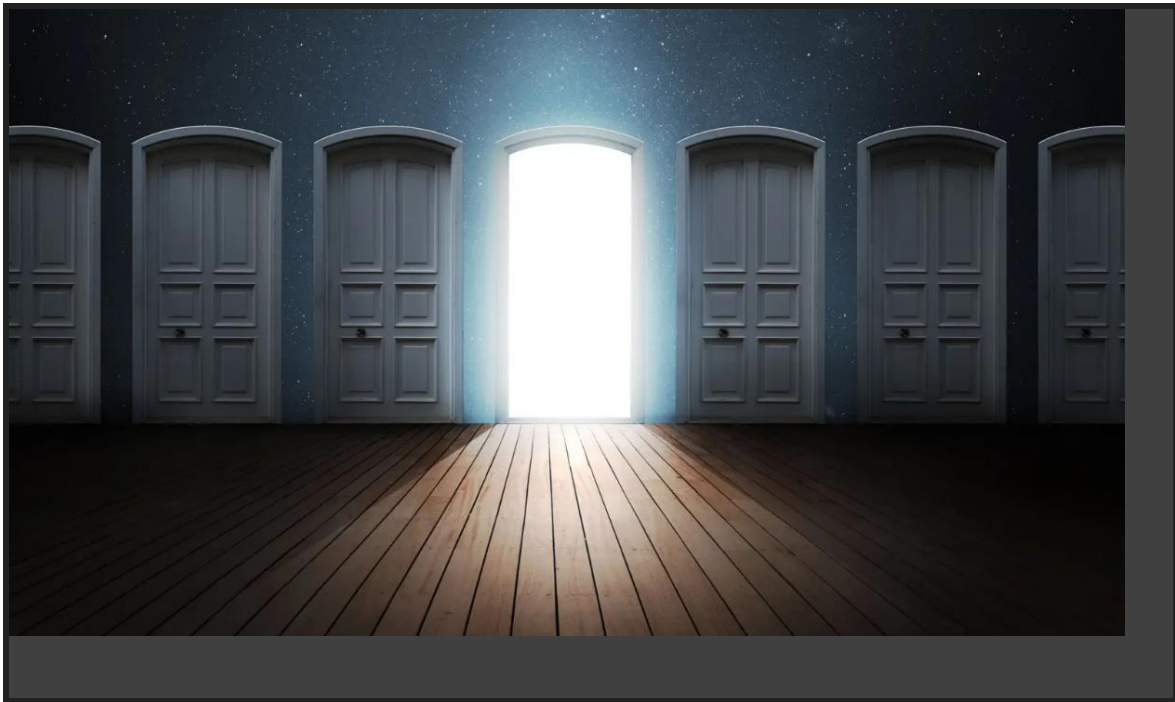
📅 Mondays, March 13 - June 6

📍 198 East 161st

🕒 9:30a-12:30p

VETERAN NEWS

Preparing VA Staff for Suicidal Veterans through Mental Health Escape Rooms



March 23, 2023

By Kendra Swaney

MSN, RN, NPD-BC, Clinical Educator, RNTTP Director

[Suicide prevention](#) is paramount to VA's care of Veterans, but how does VA prepare its staff for an encounter with a Veteran who is considering taking their

own life, and how do you ensure that the process of saving a Veteran's life is learned, understood and retained for real-world situations? One of the answers is using simulation Escape Rooms to prepare VA staff for interventions.

VA Black Hills Healthcare System (HCS) in Fort Meade, South Dakota, created a mental health escape room called "Don't Wait, Reach Out" to prepare its staff to encounter suicidal patients. The education tool was implemented during September Suicide Prevention Month. Learners were presented with a simulated suicidal patient that required appropriate interventions to 'escape' the room. Through the escape room, participants needed to demonstrate effective team communication, complete a safety room sweep and implement alterations in care for the patient. The escape room simulation was delivered to every unit at VA Black Hills HCS and community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) with modifications made to the scenario and environment based on the practice setting... [\(READ MORE\)](#)

More Veteran-related Headlines

NPR: [Iraq vets reflect on a war Americans have largely put behind them](#)

Military.com: [Survivors of Vets Who Died from PACT Act Illnesses Can Soon Reapply for Benefits](#)

U.S. News & World Report (AP): [Higher Cancer Rates Found in Military Pilots, Ground Crews](#)

WABC7: [Wounded Warrior Project CEO Mike Linnington named Grand Marshal of 2023 NY Veterans Day Parade](#)



We are looking to highlight Veterans in the arts community! Whether it's an upcoming free exhibition, performance, or piece/installation you've created, we want to showcase your work and help spread the word. Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis and promoted at our discretion. We want this to be a space for Veteran artists to express themselves in an authentic way.

Please email submissions to connect@veterans.nyc.gov with a brief bio, an artist statement, art medium, and your affiliation to the Veteran community.



This week's artist highlight is **Maria Mia Salazar**. Maria is a Peruvian born sculptor, muralist, visual Artist, poet and writer. She joined the Marine Corps after 9/11 and deployed to Iraq in 2003. She has a BS of Art Therapy with a focus in ceramics and Art History. Her sculptures have been exhibited at the ***Salmagundi Club, Art Fair 14C, The Banana Factory, St. Augustine Art Association, Van Der Plas Gallery, Curated Art Gallery***, and the ***Columbia University-Sal Gallery***. She is the founder and Executive Director of **Claymore Vets**, a non-profit whose C4 mission is "*To Cultivate a Creative and Connected Community of Veterans, First Responders and Artists to foster Social Reconnection and Growth rooted in Clay and Visual Arts*".

Contact: [Website](#) [Social Media](#)

Art Medium:

45 x 27 inches

Earthenware, Mixed Media

Title:
Mud Warrior



Mud Warrior tells the journey of a wounded healer, who has come to embrace her duality, both in light and darkness, and transmutes the pain into creative healing.

Upcoming Event



VETERAN VOICES: REFLECTION

Poetic Theater Productions' Veteran Voices program partners with The Loading Dock and the team behind The play War Dreamer to present two special showcases featuring military Veterans and family members of Veterans to share reflections on the military experience, reintegration into civilian life and hope for the future.

DATE: March 25, 2023

TIME: 3:00 pm

LOCATION: 195 East 3rd Street, New York, NY 10009

VENUE: Wild Project

March 25th's showcase will feature:

[1PABLO](#), [Jenny Pacanowski](#), [Frank Glass](#), [Sharon C. Wallace](#), [Zina Bethea-Dawson](#), and [David Stamps](#).

To RSVP [click here](#).

For more information visit [Poetic Theater Productions](#).

Upcoming VAB Public Session: April 5th (Queens, Location TBD)

NYC VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD PUBLIC SESSIONS



**CALLING ALL VETERANS! YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED TO HONOR THE SERVICE YOU GAVE!
TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE NYC VETERAN FRIENDLY!**

Wednesday, February 8th (Manhattan)

Wednesday, April 5th (Queens)

Wednesday, June 7th (Staten Island)

Wednesday, August 9th (Bronx)

Wednesday, October 18th (Brooklyn)

All Sessions begin at 6pm sharp and are hybrid. For those choosing to attend via zoom, follow the link below.

Meeting ID: 861 1325 9398 – Passcode: 355418

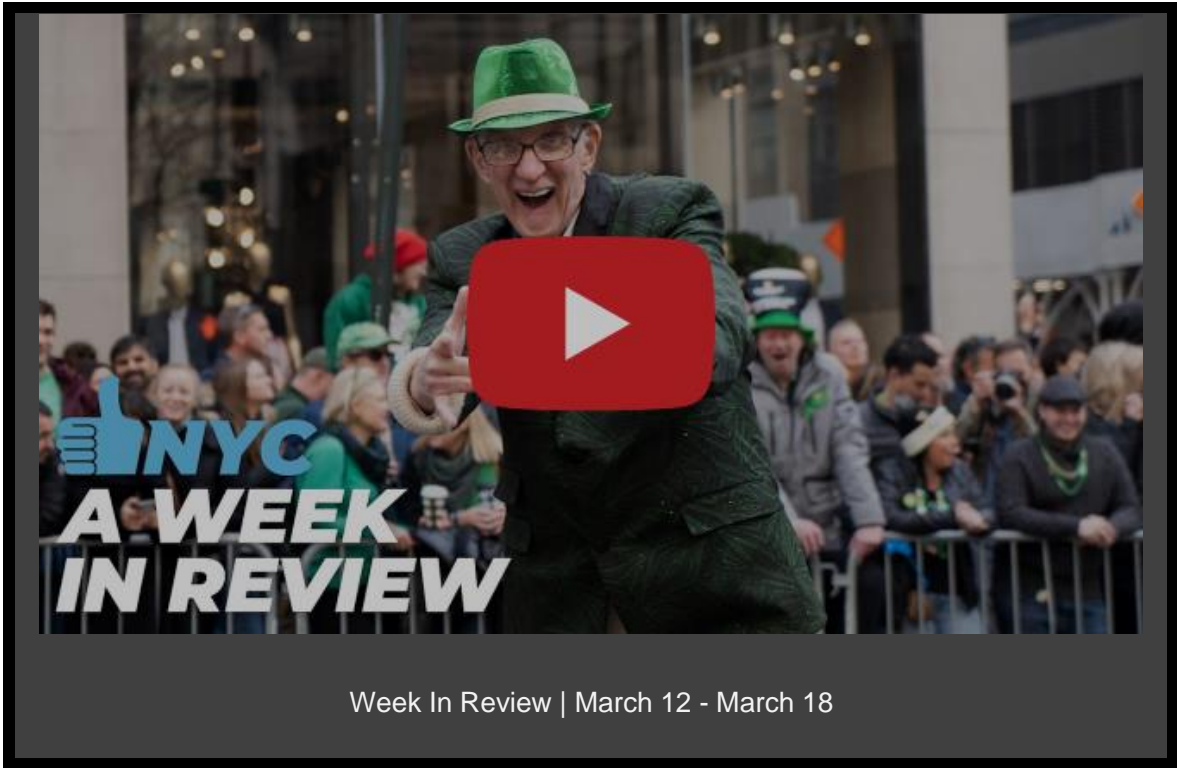
ZOOM Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86113259398?pwd=R1d2dk1BUWpLUVVlOXBsbHo1ZFhRUT09>

All Veterans, their family members and caregivers are encouraged to attend!
Please use the link below to gain access to the session.

If you are an organization that provides services that can assist NYC Veterans and their families, please contact the VAB to publicly share information about your organization to our veteran audience. If you have a question that you want answered at the public session, please use this **Email:** nycveteransadvisoryboard@gmail.com

A Message From Mayor Adams:

Each week DVS will share a short update about how our administration is getting stuff done for New Yorkers.



The Adams administration is dedicated to cutting through the noise and delivering information directly to you and all New Yorkers.

Sign up to "Hear From Eric" and get direct messages from City Hall, tailored to your interests and neighborhood, sent directly to your inbox – at [nyc.gov/hearfromeric!](https://nyc.gov/hearfromeric)

NYS DVS Funding Opportunity



New York State Division of Veterans' Services is currently accepting applications for the [state's newly created Veterans' Nonprofit Capital Program](#) which will provide \$5 million in Grant funds for reimbursement for costs related to capital improvements designed to expand and enhance quality services available to the state's veterans, service members and their families. Funding for projects will range between \$25,000 and \$75,000 and be administered by the New York State Division of Veterans' Services.

Applicants are encouraged to submit questions about the Veterans' Nonprofit Capital Program to grants@veterans.ny.gov. Applicants also can find more information on the [New York State Grants Gateway](#) website, which must be used to submit the application for funding.

The deadline for applications is March 31, 2023 at 4:00 PM

[Learn More about the Veterans' Nonprofit Capital Program \(VNCP\) Grant Opportunity](#)

Join Our Team! Be Part of the Mission!

Current DVS Job Openings

Being part of our team is a great way to continue to serve.



[Visit NYC.gov/jobs](https://www.nyc.gov/jobs) and select “Veterans’ Services” from the agency menu to learn more [about and apply to the job below.](#)

VA Work Study Positions at DVS

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) supports VA Work-Study Positions!
Here is a current list of available VA Work-Study openings:

- [Administrative Intern](#)
- [Benefit Intern](#)
- [Care Coordination Intern](#)
- [Data Analyst Intern](#)
- [Information Technology Intern](#)
- [IT Support Intern](#)
- [Legal Intern](#)
- [Outreach Coordinator Intern](#)
- [Veteran Business Promotion Intern](#)

If you are interested in applying for a DVS-specific Work-Study position and meet eligibility requirements, please submit the following to VAWorkStudy@veterans.nyc.gov:

- Resume
- Job Specific Cover Letter
- Supporting Documents found in the Job Description

[Check Here for VA Work-Study Postings](#)

NYC Civil Service Job Openings and Exams



Open Competitive Exams

Inspector (Consumer and Worker Protection): Inspectors conduct or participate in the conducting of inspections, investigations, surveys, and analyses in relation to the licensing of businesses and occupations and the sale and offering for sale of all commodities and services at every level of distribution and trade. They also conduct or participate in regulatory investigations to identify and correct violations of municipal worker protection laws. Inspectors (Consumer and Worker Protection) may operate motor vehicles in the performance of assigned duties.

Roofer: Roofers repair and maintain roofs made of tar, gravel, slate, ruberoid, tin, copper, and galvanized metal. They spread tar or asphalt over roof surfaces and apply roofing felt and mineral surfaced roll roofing; repair built up roofing; cut roofing paper, asphalt shingles, and other roofing materials to fit roof corners, pipes and other objects; replace asphalt and slate shingles; repair skylights, ventilators, gutters, valleys, flashings, and ridges; keep work records. Roofers may operate a motor vehicle in the performance of assigned duties.

Plumber: Plumbers perform work relating to the installation, alteration, maintenance, and repair of piping of gas, potable water, plumbing and drainage systems. They install, maintain and repair piping of all kinds for water, gas, storm, waste, soil and vent systems;

set, maintain and repair plumbing fixtures, equipment and appurtenances; when necessary, determine and requisition job materials while work is in progress; supervise and are responsible for the work of Plumber's Helpers; in the temporary absence of the supervisor, may perform the duties of that position; and operate a motor vehicle.

To receive monthly updates on upcoming civil service exams click the button below to be directed to the Subscribe to the DCAS Newsletter page. On the registration form, select "City Jobs and Civil Service Announcements".

[Subscribe to the DCAS Newsletter Here](#)

Programs and Initiatives

Affordable Housing For Veterans



The [NYC Department of Veterans' Services \(DVS\)](#) maintains a list of federal, state, and city programs that offers a limited, but selective list of affordable housing options for veterans seeking financial relief for their housing arrangements. Visit our [Affordable Housing for Veterans](#) page to learn more.

Empowering Veteran Business Owners



The primary mission of the [VBLA](#) is to serve Veterans seeking support and assistance with running a business and in their pursuit of New York City Government contracting opportunities. Our leadership association engages with the private sector, government, advisory board, and local partners to build a consortium that facilitates the growth and development of Veteran Businesses.

VetBizNYC: Supporting Veteran Entrepreneurship

DVS has launched [VetBizNYC](#), an interactive map that identifies Veteran-owned businesses across the five boroughs. New Yorkers can use our interactive map to find and support Veteran-owned businesses in their community.



Are You Getting the Benefits You Deserve?

The [NYC Department of Veterans' Services \(DVS\)](#) represents NYC Veterans in claims for benefits from the [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs](#). Our team is also qualified to assist with PACT Act related claims. If you had a toxic exposure during your service, time is crucial for you to get the benefits you deserve. To file a claim, fill out the [VetConnectNYC.org](#) form and select **Benefits Navigation** as your preferred service.



VetConnectPro: A First-in-the-Nation Employment Tool



[VetConnectPro](#), is a new employment tool designed to help Veterans find employment within NYC government. The platform features a military skills translator that can match your service experience and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) to City jobs and civil service exams. Upload your resume and get started today: nyc.gov/vetconnectpro.

Newsletter Sign-up

If you received this newsletter by way of a friend or colleague and have yet to sign-up on your own, click [here](#), and stay up-to-date with the latest news impacting the community, updates on city services, info on DVS programs, Veteran-specific resources & more.

Contact Us

- Complete a service request form at vetconnectnyc.org
- [Message the Commissioner](#)
- [Partner with DVS](#)
- [Press Inquiries](#)
- [Event Request Form](#)

Stay tuned on our website www.nyc.gov/vets and social media platforms [@nycveterans](#), or via email at connect@veterans.nyc.gov.