DAV Recognizes Outstanding VA Employees

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Commander Stephen “Butch” Whitehead will present the DAV National Commander’s Awards to three devoted and skillful Department of Veterans Affairs employees for their outstanding commitment to the Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration and National Cemetery Administration, respectively. The winners will be formally recognized during the DAV & Auxiliary Virtual Salute program scheduled for Aug. 26 at 7 p.m. Eastern time at dav.org/virtualsalute.

Edward Hofnagle

The Outstanding Veterans Benefits Administration Employee of the Year award will be presented to Marine Corps veteran Edward Hofnagle, a rating board coach at the Veterans Benefits Administration regional office in Roanoke, Virginia. Hofnagle, who served two tours of duty in Iraq, has established himself as a stalwart advocate for thousands of veterans, particularly Blue Water Navy veterans who served in waters off the coast of Vietnam, many of whom are in financial hardship, terminally ill, homeless or of advanced age. His efforts contributed significantly to the Roanoke regional office, earning the prestigious award of top VA regional office in the nation. Hofnagle joined the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2008.

“Mr. Hofnagle understands how important it is for our nation’s
veterans to have a seamless relationship between the VA and DAV,” said Whitehead. “He has made a lasting impact on the lives of Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans who have waited decades for the compensation, health care and other benefits they earned in service to our nation.”

Lisamarie Laskero

Lisamarie Laskero is this year’s Outstanding Veterans Health Administration Employee. A social worker with the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois, she has devoted her career to helping veterans fight homelessness and receive vitally important VA compensation and other benefits. Laskero’s work with veterans has made such an impact that she joined the Illinois National Guard, where she attained the rank of captain. Her career in the Illinois Guard echoes her civilian work as she assists active, Guard and Reserve service members as a social worker.

“Mrs. Laskero’s commitment to fighting the threat of homelessness – one of the most distressing issues veterans currently face – shines through her work each day,” said Whitehead. “To her, service to our veterans is more than a phrase; it is a way of life she continues to live, both with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Illinois National Guard.”
The Outstanding National Cemetery Administration Employee of the Year award will be presented to Michael Brophy, an Army veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Brophy, an administrator of the historic Baltimore National Cemetery complex, oversees the care for three national cemeteries across 83 acres in Maryland. He ensures the Baltimore, Annapolis and Loudon Park cemeteries are maintained in the manner appropriate to honor the veterans, and family members, who select these locations as their final resting place. His district’s leadership has recognized Brophy for turning around a once-struggling complex and returning it to the respect, honor and service our veterans and their survivors deserve. He served 24 years in the U.S. Army as an aviation officer, retiring in 2015 at the rank of lieutenant colonel.

“As a career soldier, Mr. Brophy knows firsthand the emotional weight that comes with caring for veterans in their final resting place,” said Whitehead. “By undertaking the challenging assignment of improving such a massive complex, he shows us all that despite no longer being with us, our veterans are never forgotten.

“All of these recipients exemplify the best advocates our veterans and their families could ask for,” said Whitehead. “They continue to go above and beyond in serving the men and
women who sacrificed for this nation, and it is my sincere honor to recognize them.

**About DAV**

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them, fighting for the interests of America’s injured heroes on Capitol Hill, providing employment resources to veterans and their families, and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a nonprofit organization with more than 1 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org).