

NYS Department of Veterans' Services to Host Virtual Program Honoring Black Veterans for Black History Month

"From Combat to Community: The Continued Impact of Black Veterans" Virtual Event Takes Place February 19, 2025

ALBANY, NY, UNITED STATES, February 6, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The New York State

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“Our event honors the proud legacy of Black Veterans and recognizes their leadership, advocacy, and innovation,” Viviana DeCohen, Commissioner, NYS Department of Veterans' Services said.”

Viviana DeCohen

Department of Veterans' Services will host a special virtual program titled “From Combat to Community: The Continued Impact of Black Veterans,” on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, from 10 AM to 12:30 PM, in honor of February as Black History Month. This inspiring virtual event will be hosted online to reach a broad audience. To register, scan the QR code on the attached flyer.

The webinar will honor the legacy of Black Veterans and their profound contributions to both military service and society. The program will highlight the remarkable ways Black Veterans have transitioned from serving on the

frontlines to driving change in their communities through leadership, advocacy, and innovation. Through compelling stories, insightful discussions, and community recognition, the program seeks to deepen appreciation for the role of Black Veterans in creating a stronger nation and a more just world.

Featured Speakers:

- Keynote: Dr. Annette Tucker-Osborne, Colonel (Retired), U.S. Army Veteran, National President of National Association of Black Military Women;
- Reverend Viviana DeCohen, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, Commissioner, New York State Department of Veterans' Services;
- Honorable Dr. Kimberly A. McClain, U.S. Air Force Veteran, Former Assistant Secretary Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations;

- Ms. Toni Holland, U.S. Navy Veteran, Retired Director, Charter Communications;
- Mr. Fenton Reese, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, Deputy Security Manager, New York Metro Campus & Eastern United States, Bloomberg LP;
- Mr. Ryan L. Waller, U.S. Army Veteran, Veteran Benefits Advisor 1, New York State Department of Veterans' Services;
- Ms. Burgandy Williams, U.S. Army Veteran, Artist, and Singer;
- Mr. Darryl Varlack-Butler, U.S. Army Veteran, Chief Waymaker, Worth Justice Inc.; and
- Dr. Lessie Branch, U.S. Navy Veteran, Special Assistant for Community Engagement, New York State Department of Veterans' Services.

"FROM COMBAT TO COMMUNITY: THE CONTINUED IMPACT OF BLACK VETERANS"
 Virtual Program
 Honoring
Black History Month

FEBRUARY 19, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Scan code to register

From Combat to Community: The Continued Impact of Black Veterans

"Black Veterans have made remarkable contributions to our nation's history, both on the battlefield and in our communities. This virtual event is a wonderful opportunity to honor their legacy and recognize the leadership, advocacy, and innovation they bring to our society. By sharing their stories and experiences, we hope to inspire a greater appreciation for their role in creating a stronger nation and a more just world," Viviana DeCohen, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Veterans' Services and U.S. Marine Corps Veteran said.

"Throughout history, Black Veterans have exemplified resilience, leadership, patriotism and an unwavering commitment to service. Our event is a testament to their contributions and the indelible impact they have made in positively shaping our communities. I am honored to be part of this special program that celebrates their lives and legacies while highlighting the importance of continuing to support and uplift our Veterans," Dr. Lessie Branch, U.S. Navy Veteran and Special Assistant for Community Engagement, New York State Department of Veterans' Services said.

For more information, please contact the New York State Department of Veterans' Services at (518) 419-4206, joshua.fitzpatrick@veterans.ny.gov.

About the NYS Department of Veterans' Services

The New York State Department of Veterans' Services, which has served as the state's advocacy

agency for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families since 1945, maintains an agencywide commitment of serving all Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families in a wide range of practice areas, including claims and appeals for benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, discharge upgrade appeals to the United States Department of Defense, and claims for New York State benefits. Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families are encouraged to contact the Department at 888-838-7697 or its website, <https://veterans.ny.gov/>, to meet – in person or virtually – with an accredited Veterans Benefits Advisor to address their needs and gain the full measure of benefits that they have earned. Follow DVS on Facebook, Instagram, and X.

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