

## November Veterans Group issue

Only members of the NALC Veterans Group will be listed in the November Veterans Group issue, so join now to be included.

## Veterans Group

For more information, go to [nalc.org/veterans](http://nalc.org/veterans).

# Resources for veterans' mental health

**I**n the days leading up to Sept. 11 this year, 9/11 memorials and remembrances were all over the news reminding us of the magnitude and the pain of the attack.

Following that fateful day, America hunted those who planned the attack, seeking justice. In doing so, our military forces—many of whom had signed up to serve our nation in response to the attack—quickly ramped up, got our soldiers ready and sent them on their mission.

No matter the level of preparation, our fighting forces faced the unthinkable, and were wounded beyond expectation, both physically and non-physically. Both those wounds deserved and required attention, care and respect.

In World War I and II, the terms “shellshock” and “battle fatigue” were often used to label those who had suffered a non-physical injury. It wasn't until many years later that the condition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was formally recognized, and for many it still carries a stigma. We owe it to all who suffer non-physical injuries by respecting their needs and maintaining respect for them as they work toward healing. We should be a helping hand on a shoulder, as well as a friend to turn to.

Although 9/11 is 24 years behind us, we have continued to fight in one part of the world or another for too many years.

As our warriors returned, we were not fully prepared to help heal the physical and non-physical injuries. We can help by learning about the resources available to help through the non-physical injuries.

This month we bring your attention to available resources.

## Department of Veterans Affairs

We begin by directing your attention to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and its National Center for PTSD, which you can find at [ptsd.va.gov](http://ptsd.va.gov). Make sure that you enter that site in the address bar of your browser correctly so that you are not taken to any fraudulent site.

There are a number of tabs that take you deeper into the available information, including understanding PTSD and its treatments, getting help for the veteran as well as the family and friends, as well as apps, videos, online programs and publications. The VA has compiled quite an array of information to help you.

## Employee Assistance Program

The NALC and USPS bargained a national Employee Assistance Program (EAP) whose purpose it is to provide programs of self-help (see this month's Safety and Health column on page 31, which covers EAP).

When you type in [eap4you.com](http://eap4you.com) into the browser address bar and press enter, it should take you to the EAP main page. At the top of the main page, you will find menu items “Services,” “Resources,” “Suicide Prevention,” “Monthly Focus” “About Us” and “Advisory Committees.” Click on “Resources,” which opens up additional items, one of which is “Military Life.” Explore all the materials contained therein.

If you want to search for additional help resources in your area, go to the main page ([eap4you.com](http://eap4you.com)), then scroll to the bottom and locate the



“findhelp.org” button. Click it, then enter your ZIP Code. When I entered my ZIP, it identified 3,818 programs. As you hover over the icons, from the left you will find “health” as the fifth item, and when you click on “health,” it opens additional menu items, showing a total of 555 care facilities for various needs.

## Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA envisions that people with, affected by, or at risk for mental health and substance use conditions receive care, achieve well-being, and thrive.

Its home page lists a number of “Get Help” items, including help to find treatment near you, 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, and Disaster Distress Help line, as well as many more items.

**The most important thing for friends and family to do is understand what your loved one is going through and helping them connect with the help that is available. We all need to contribute to ending the stigma that goes with reaching out for such care.**

Maddigan served in the Coast Guard for nearly a decade.



## Veteran profile: Shane Maddigan

**S**hane Maddigan, a Pittsburgh, PA Branch 84 member, was a member of the Coast Guard for nearly 10 years. After trying several trades, he enlisted at around age 23, seeking stability and direction, and he says that he “found that in boot camp.” His duties during his Coast Guard career spanned law enforcement, search and rescue, construction work and international cooperation.

When it came to choosing the Coast Guard over other branches of the military, he concluded, “Instead of training for something that may or may not happen [a war], I decided I wanted to train to do something that I would be using every single day.”

For his first two years he was aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Gallatin, stationed in New York City. This posting gave him the opportunity to sail across the Atlantic, through the Caribbean and around the Mediterranean, Black and Baltic Seas. During this time, his duties were mainly in law enforcement, ensuring that large shipments of drugs didn’t make it into the United States. His other responsibilities at that time included search and rescue and training with international coast guards.

Working with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, his team tracked drug runners leaving Colombia on their way to the United States. As Maddigan was part of the Gallatin’s boarding team, he would often board ships and seize drugs—mostly cocaine—of which there were often about six to 10 tons per ship. He recalled a vivid memory of him and his fellow Coast Guardsmen arranging large bushels of confiscated cocaine “like reclining chairs.”

He remembers one dramatic incident

where a drug transport freighter sailed into a hurricane, hoping to evade law enforcement. As Maddigan’s team was about to catch them, the crew deliberately scuttled their ship.

“We probably spent two months trying to find this freighter,” Maddigan said. “When we finally found it, it was because they sent out a distress call because their grand plan was to follow a hurricane that was going up through the Gulf of Mexico. That was their cover to try to get into the States. They started taking on a lot of water, so we had to go rescue them, knowing that the freighter was full of cocaine. When we got on scene and started to rescue them from the ship, they let the ship sink before we got on board to get the cocaine.”

After a few years of law enforcement, he was transferred to Charleston, SC, and worked as the base crane operator. He said he would also “build navigational lights on the rivers and service them, fix them, build new ones—things like that.”

For his last few years, he was stationed in Sewickley, PA, where he was a river tender, responsible for servicing navigation aids, such as buoys and lights on the Ohio, Monongahela, Allegheny and Kanawha rivers.

Among his duties in the Coast Guard were search and rescue missions. To his surprise and disappointment, the majority of these missions ended up being recovery ones, not rescue.

“If the helicopter crews don’t get to the search and rescue folks first, it’s a recovery mission,” he said. “It’s not a rescue mission. That’s just reality, and nobody ever tells you that when you’re signing up.”

After transferring locations every few years for a decade, his wife told

him that she wanted to stop moving so frequently because it didn’t make sense for her to continuously change jobs. So, in 2005, Maddigan left the military and began working at a construction company, which he did for only a few months.

“My father-in-law told me, ‘You need to get to the Post Office,’” Maddigan said. “‘It’s a good job.’”

He became a letter carrier that same year, a position he has held for the last 20 years. In the union, he held several positions as part of Mon-Yough Branch 332—which subsequently merged with Branch 84—including shop steward, executive vice president and president.

“The leadership abilities that I’ve learned in the Coast Guard, you know, I was able to apply those in the Post Office as well,” Maddigan said in regard to his union positions.

Maddigan enjoys being a letter carrier, saying, “I’m an outside person. ... I like being out in the cold weather.”

### Join the NALC Veterans Group

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members—both active and retired letter carriers—who are also military veterans the ability to connect with fellow NALC veterans and stay informed on issues of importance to letter carrier veterans. It is free to join.

Members receive a pin as a symbol of gratitude for their military service and membership in NALC.

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at [nalc.org/veterans](http://nalc.org/veterans).





# JOIN THE NALC VETERANS GROUP



You continue to serve your country—

**THANK YOU!**

## **NALC Veterans Group**

Complete this form and mail it to:

**NALC Veterans Group, c/o NALC,  
100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144**

**Free  
to join**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

NALC BRANCH NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ BRANCH OF SERVICE: \_\_\_\_\_

**I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S):**

☐ AMERICAN LEGION ☐ DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS ☐ VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

☐ OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_