The ABA Health Law Section’s Military & Veterans Health Law, Interest Group, its leaders, Advisory Board, Members, Friends and Associates honor and celebrate those who are willing to put their lives on the line for millions of Americans through their service in our armed forces. We are grateful to each one of you.

During the past year, we have put those words into action, participating as speakers in symposia, presenting conferences, webinars, and attending both Military and Veterans events across the country. Our Membership is fully engaged in this cause, including our law students, in the Law School Consortium. An important goal for the Leaders has obviously been to create awareness of Military & Veterans Health Law, as evidenced by some of the programs in our 2016 calendar. We invite you to join us in our quest to provide even more significant programming in 2017.

- December, 2015, at the ABA Washington Health Law Summit, the Chair of the Task force moderated a Panel addressing Veterans Services. Vice Chair of the Advisory Board, ABA Sr. Counsel Ken Goldsmith, JD, and Vice Chair of the MVHL IG, Patricia Roberts, Director of William and Mary Law School’s Puller Clinic, and Founder of the Law School Consortium presented a formidable introduction to the goals of the IG, as they relate to providing services to Veterans.
- The Chair and a Vice Chair collaborated with the ABA HLS Diversity Committee to host a panel on Disability and Diversity in Three Special Populations; LGBT; Veterans, and Disabled Persons.
- The IG also hosted a very successful member-breakfast, discussing Veterans Medical Issues.
- In March 2016, Vice Chair, Paul Freese, of neighborhood Legal Services, Los Angeles, and Advisory Board Member, Antoinette Balta, Co-Founder of Vets Legal in California, presented a powerful panel on legal representation for Homeless Veterans experiencing severe mental and physical health issues as consequences of their homelessness at the ABA Health Law Section’s Annual Emerging Issues in Health Care Conference in San Diego.
- Paul Freese also presented the latest information on Veterans Treatment Courts.
- Lt. Caruso, introduced Lt. Col. Robert Marshall, representing the U.S. Naval Hospital, San Diego, Medical Command, to speak to members and leaders on the issue of Medical Discharges. Attendees were enthralled at Lt. Col. Marshall’s presentation, and the breakfast lasted for almost two hour
- Vice Chair, LT. J.A.G.C. Thomas A. Caruso, stationed in Norfolk, VA, spoke on Representing Military Personnel at Administrative Separation Boards: The Role of Experts; Lt. Caruso has compiled a list of medical experts who provide testimony by conference call, or medical affidavits, to collaborate with J.A.G. Officers representing military personnel appearing before the ADSEP Boards.
- In April, our Task Force convened a national teleconference with two special Veterans Advocates; 1) Hugh McManners, a British Combat Veteran of nearly 20 years and expert on PTSD. Hugh is the author of "Scars of War" an extensive examination of combat PTSD; and, 2) Jonathan Sherin, who served as the Chief of Psychiatry for the West L.A. Veterans Administration for a decade before accepting a position as National Vice-President with Volunteers of America - the nation’s largest provider of housing for homeless veterans. Jon is currently consulting on major policy initiatives with the V.A.
- In June, the Chair; two Vice Chairs, and four Advisory Board Members, attended an ABA/Army One/Jones Day, and Bob Woodruff Foundation, co-sponsored, Military and Veterans Legal Services Summit in Washington, D.C. Arising from that Summit, two Vice Chairs were invited to be members of the ABA President’s Commission for the Veterans Legal Services Initiative.
Details of this wonderful Initiative, and the Commission, appear on the ABA President’s Homepage. [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/leadership/office_of_the_president.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/leadership/office_of_the_president.html)

- In August, our quarterly Membership Call was addressed by Dr. Linda Spoonster Schwartz, PhD, RN. Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Schwartz, a Vietnam Veteran, spoke of the Program she instituted as Director of Public Policy in CT, entitled “Have you Ever Served in the Military?” This special program instituted by the American Academy of Nursing, highlights potential illnesses and concerns that might cause a Veteran to seek medical help. The program educates health care professionals, encouraging them to ask the question of any patient who might present to a facility, and alerts the medical personnel to ask more pertinent questions.

- Also in August, the Chair and two Vice Chairs attended the ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco, participating in ABA Military and Veteran Committees. One of the speakers at the meeting was Associate Justice, Eileen C. Moore, also a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, a nurse, and 2nd Lt., U.S. Army Nurse Corps, combat nurse-1966, earning the Vietnam Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal, prior to graduating from Law School; becoming a member of the California Bar, and ascending to the Judiciary.

- September, 2016, the Chair represented the IG, along with Major General, Margaret Wilmoth, Advisory Board Member, and Dr. Bill Cross, PhD, on a special military & Veterans Public Health Law Panel at the Network for Public Health Law Conference in Washington, D.C., discussing Military & Veteran Suicide: Identifying Issues, Causes and Symptoms, and Providing Resistance Programs to address those at risk.

- On October 29th, the IG co-sponsored a VA Certification Program at William and Mary Law School’s Puller Veterans Clinic for Virginia Lawyers. Vice Chair, LT, Caruso was one of the presenters. The program was a wonderful success.

- November 2016 is a very busy month for the MVHL, IG: two Vice Chairs, an Advisory board Member, and five IG Members attended Pepperdine’s Access to Justice Symposium, presenting various panels during the two-day event.

- On November, 11th, Remembrance Day, Vice Chair, Angela Drake, Director of Missouri Law School’s Veterans Clinic will present a special symposium on Traumatic Brain Injury.

- On November 21st, and December 16th, the ABA, and ABA Health Law Section, granted CLE webinars to MVHL IG, to provide the three-hour VA Certification program ABA Lawyers.

- Finally, at this year’s ABA Annual Washington Health Law Summit, following ABA President, Linda Klein’s Address, the MVHL IG will collaborate on a panel presentation on medico-legal partnerships. This Annual summit is an extraordinary event in D.C., and a wonderful opportunity for us to meet our members. Please consider registering for the conference at the following link. [http://shop.americanbar.org/ebus/ABAEEventsCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?productId=203663421](http://shop.americanbar.org/ebus/ABAEEventsCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?productId=203663421)