



THOREAU CHAPTER VETERANS ORGANIZATION
(Eastern Navajo Agency)
Post Office Box 136
Thoreau, NM 87323
(505) 948-6737

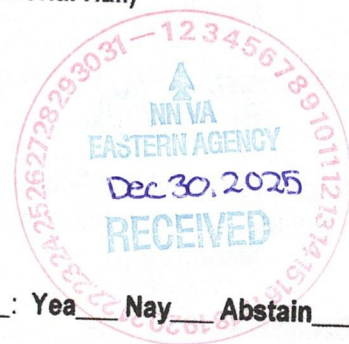
Lester Emerson, Commander

Willie Brown, Vice-Commander

Rosemary Gibson, Secretary

TCVO MEETING AGENDA
Sunday, December 7, 2025 – 0800 Hours
Thoreau Chapter Veterans Center (Watson Gibson, Sr., Memorial Hall)

Call Meeting to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Moment of Silence for All Comrades
Chaplain's Corner (Message & Invocation)
Recognition of Guests and/or Officials



Review and Adopt Agenda:

Motion by: _____ **2nd by:** _____ : Yea ___ Nay ___ Abstain ___

Review and Adopt November 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion by: _____ **2nd by:** _____ : Yea ___ Nay ___ Abstain ___

Presentation: Doreen (Wonda) Johnson, State Representative, District 5

Financial Report:

1. Veterans Trust Funds
 - a. a. Thoreau Chapter Funds
2. Motion to accept Financial Report

Motion by: _____ **2nd by:** _____ : Yea ___ Nay ___ Abstain ___

3. Fundraising (Volunteers for Veterans Food Sale to Pay for Veterans Center Utilities)

Birthdays: Joe Herrera; Perry James and Ronnie Largo, Jr. – Stand up, tell your age!

Appreciation Awards: Doreen (Wonda) Johnson, State Representative
Herman Yellowhorse, former Vice-President, Thoreau Chapter House

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Thoreau Chapter Veterans Center
 - a. Develop Policy and Procedures for Use of Veterans Building
 - b. Who Can Use
 - c. Set Fees



2. Reports: ENVO, TCVO, TLAC, Chapter Officials and Council Delegate

3. Concerns – Comments

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Amend the Fund Management Plan of the Thoreau Chapter Veterans Organization and Thoreau Chapter for FY 26.
(Deferred to December TCVO Meeting).

2. Resolution TCVO-FY26-0006: Approving Thoreau Chapter Veterans Organization Fund Management Plan for Funds Generated (Deferred to December TCVO Meeting).

Motion by: _____ 2nd by: _____ : Yea ___ Nay ___ Abstain ___.

3. NN Veterans Trust Fund Financial Assistance Requests.

Motion by: _____ 2nd by: _____ : Yea ___ Nay ___ Abstain ___.

4. Approve stipend payment for TCVO Officers (December 7, 2025); Approve stipend for ENVO meeting for Commander on upcoming meeting in December).

Motion by: _____ 2nd by: _____ : Yea ___ Nay ___ Abstain ___.

Set Next Meeting Date: _____, 2025

Announcements:

December 7, 2025 Pearl Harbor Day

December 13, 2025 Chapter Christmas Luncheon, 12 Noon

December 21, 2025 Winter Begins

December 25, 2025 Christmas

December 31, 2025 New Year's Eve

Adjournment @ _____

Motion by: _____ 2nd by: _____ : Yea ___ Nay ___ Abstain ___.



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Commander **Lester Emerson, Commander**
Rosemary Gibson, Secretary

Willie Brown, Vice-

THOREAU CHAPTER VETERANS ORGANIZATION
December 7, 2025 – Thoreau Chapter Veterans Center

Call Meeting to Order – by Commander Emerson at 8:48am

Pledge of Allegiance – was recited by all; lead by Commander Emerson

Moment of Silence – To all Comrades, families, and extended families who have passed on.

Chaplain's Corner (Message & Invocation) Chaplain Long wasn't available to attend the meeting; therefore, Commander called on Willie Brown, Vice Commander to pray. Vice Commander provided a strong prayer. Commander Emerson thanked Willie for comments and his strong prayer.

Recognition of Guests and/or Officials: Commander acknowledged his fellow officers and thanked everyone who are here with us for the meeting in particular State Representative Doreen (Wonda) Johnson and Herman Yellowhorse, former Chapter Vice President and everyone who came to the meeting.

Review and Adopt Agenda: Commander read the agenda; Copies were also available at the entrance. Motion by Herman Yellowhorse; 2nd by Udall Gibson, Sr., **Yea 17 Nay 0; Abstain 3.** Commander asked if there was any change or addition to be made to the agenda. Secretary Gibson requested to have Christmas added and Commander also requested to add two resolutions: TCVO-FY-26-008 for Color Guard Service to be paid from \$250 check donated by Senator George Munoz and check turned in to Chapter Coordinator. TCVO-FY26-010 for Budget Transfer. Agreed to add to the agenda by Motioning party. These will be added under New Business.

Review and Adopt November 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes: Commander asked if we should adopt the November 2, 2025 as is or have it read. Motion by Udall

Gibson, Sr., 2nd by Francis Brown to adopt as is: **Yea 17 Nay 0; Abstain 3.**

Presentation: Commander welcomed State Representative Wonda Johnson as our guest speaker. Representative Johnson cordially greeted everyone and introduced herself naming her clanship and explained where her roots are. She is a six term State Representative for her District 5, that covers 15 chapters which she named plus other communities she serves. Currently she is Chair of the Governor's Election Office and another Committee that deals with the Military. She actively supports veterans and appreciates their service to country. She explained she comes from a long line of veterans on both sides of her family and was raised to respect veterans. She thanked the veterans, the prayer that was done to begin the meeting and for breakfast. She mentioned the late Commander Jackson Gibson who she explained kept on her for capital outlay funds to help build the veterans building which she has toured and is really pleased with the beautiful building. Although Thoreau wasn't in her District, she supported and funded plans to have a veterans' building and to keep Jackson from being a pest! Ms. Johnson feels we're all relatives so whether we're in another District, we work together and help at State level, at the federal level and down to Navajo Nation and local communities. She's very happy to represent everyone as a State Representative and does recognize the struggle of our people which she sees as talented and hard-

working people. She commented that hopefully everyone had a nice Thanksgiving and are ready for Christmas. If TCVO has a Christmas party, Ms. Johnson offered to donate a turkey or ham to be picked up at T&R Market, but apologized she won't attend because her schedule is full. She again thanked everyone for attending and told everyone to take care of yourselves. She gave out a bag of goodies to everyone in attendance with a Thank You sticker attached to the bag containing holiday treats. Commissioner Emerson thanked Representative Johnson and appreciated taking time out of her busy schedule to be in attendance and to give out bags of treats. He told her she is welcome to stop in any time.

Financial Report: 1. Veterans Trust Funds: Commander said he doesn't have any good news to report. We don't really know what's going on in Window Rock but it certainly does have a negative impact on us at the Agency level on down to us at the local level. There have been 1,072 veterans' names purged from Eastern Agency; TCVO had 98 veterans locally but 67 names were purged so we only have 31 veterans. However, because decision makers felt guilty or whatever for purging names from Eastern Agency only, back in August or September, \$3million was approved and given to the 110 chapters and TCVO got \$5,000 strictly for awards and catering. There's also \$10,000 for purged veterans. Commander read the FY26 Budget Shell that was discussed, prepared and approved by the veterans and submitted to the Agency by the Commander. However, he was advised that although the Trust Funds was approved for the 31 veterans recognized on the list to receive benefits from Trust Funds, others were given assistance and turns out that the eligible 31 veterans did not get their requests fulfilled. The Agency was presented a resolution and instructions to honor requests for the 31 veterans only, but it was not honored so it left some veterans without their requests filled. It is understood that names that were purged got assistance from the Trust Funds designated for only the 31 veterans whose applications are complete and part of the 31 recognized.

It's a big disappointment that protocol wasn't followed leaving unanswered questions and most frustrating is that the veterans whose applications are complete and identified as one of the 31 on the list were told the Trust Funds is all used. Only advice the Commander could give was to let the veterans know to go to the Agency and follow up on their applications

There's no idea if Trust Funds will be reimbursed from the General Funds of \$600,000. Commander might get some answers at the Eastern Navajo Agency Veterans Organization (ENAVO) meeting this coming Wednesday. Udall Gibson, Sr., made mention of the Self-Help which is important and hopefully, the same amount agreed upon is what it will be according to what TCVO worked on for our FY26 budget. Tommy Yazzie commented that at this point, he doesn't believe that he will get the assistance he requested because it's not clear what the Agency and Window Rock are doing. Udall Gibson, Sr., also mentioned that

if Trust Funds and General Funds are being used without checking on the 31 eligibles and those on the purged listing, it's possible to not expect requests to be honored. Robin Wood stated that he feels Vietnam Veterans are getting old and need to be considered first as they truly earned any assistance. The same with our Code Talkers; our community had several and possibly down to one or two. It is obvious that the Navajo Nation's government doesn't even have any power anywhere or for anybody. Elections don't mean nothing these days, the way I see it he said.

Thoreau Chapter Funds: Commander explained that TCVO will receive \$5000 for Awards: \$1,000 for awards; \$1,000 for catering and \$3,000 for food. We used up all of last year's funding. He reported on the \$956 food purchase.

Fundraising: Our guest, Ms. Darlene Wilson spoke on how they fundraise and that included raffle. She explained that they set up fundraiser at the Rug Auction by contacting Marceline Hale and cleared a good amount of funds including other methods they use to fundraise. She agreed that it is hard to get volunteers. She gave some good pointers for TLAC to consider for fundraising events and offered her assistance. Ms. Wilson even volunteered to help TLAC since we're short on volunteers. Mr. Harry Antonio gave \$50 donation to the Commander towards fundraiser. Secretary Gibson explained her concern is for the building's utilities and that by now, we've used up all the fundraising funds. A veteran's wife inquired if TCVO or TLAC is tax exempt or if Chapter is certified. Commander explained that TCVO didn't but the Chapter has tax exempt status. She wants to donate but wants the tax exempt to claim for her donation. Upon entering the meeting, Chapter Secretary was asked if TCVO can use the Chapter's tax exemption for individuals who donate to TCVO, and her answer was no and gave no options. Commander also explained that we still have state capital outlay money which Mr. Garcia was able to get for us and it expires in June 2026. Representative Johnson said she'll request to have it reauthorized on Monday, day after our TCVO meeting. Motion by Udall Gibson, Sr., 2nd by Fran Brown: **Yea, 13; Nay, 0; Abstain, 5** to accept Financial Report.

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Birthdays: Joe Herrera; Perry James and Ronnie Largo, Jr., had birthdays. Cake was served and singing of happy birthday was done although none of the birthday veterans were in attendance.

Appreciation Awards: State Representative Wonda Johnson was called to the front to receive an award for her help to the TCVO in providing capital outlay funding even though Thoreau is not within her district. She worked with her state colleagues in helping provide funding to have a veterans' building built for veterans. Representative Johnson is an avid supporter of veterans and wants the best for veterans. TCVO Commander presented Representative Johnson with a Pendleton shawl with her name embroidered onto the shawl. TCVO was

pleased that she accepted the award and appreciate all that she and her colleagues have done to give seed money to begin the building of the veterans' center. TCVO extended an invitation for Representative Johnson to visit anytime and whenever she can. Next to receive an award was Vice Commander Willie Brown. He also received a Pendleton robe. He was Vice Commander during the planning stage and at the beginning of the actual construction before he stepped down as Vice Commander when his term was up. He is back as current Vice Commander and wasn't at the Veterans Day celebration due to a family emergency. Former Chapter Vice President Herman Yellowhorse was also an awards recipient of a Pendleton robe as well; he didn't attend the Veterans Day celebration either due to health issues when awards were presented. Mr. Yellowhorse, along with the Chapter officials were supportive of the veterans to have a building built and help lobby for capital outlay funds when he was the Chapter Vice President. TCVO recognized all the Chapter officials and Coordinator for all their support and participation during the early stages and throughout the building process.

Army veteran Lance Gibson purchased 21 Pendleton blankets to be given as awards as a token of his appreciation in memory of his late Father, Jackson Gibson, former TCVO Commander. He was asked to join the Commander to present the award of a Pendleton blanket to the recipients. The Pendleton blanket had the name of the recipient's name embroidered thereto.

Old Business: Earlier, Commander asked the motioning party to add ENVO Monthly Meeting to add as Item d. under Old Business and was agreed to by the motioning party. This topic will change the resolution numbers and the agenda topic numbers: **Yea, 17; Nay, 0; Abstain, 4.**

Thoreau Veterans Service Center Project Update: There was a lengthy discussion about the Veterans Center. Although it is opened, it requires a Facility Usage Management Plan. Commander began with informing that the building can be used by the Eastern Navajo Agency Veterans Commanders and that he promised they can have their meeting here like they did last month. He explained that ENAV Commanders do not have an office or a specific place to meet monthly. He indicated that other entities, Navajo Nation offices, County, State and Federal officials can use it and even the chapter. However, a discussion ensued that because of liability concerns, the building needs to establish a Facility Usage Management Plan before it can be used by outside entities. Chapter Secretary Judy Platero stated that it is better to have a plan in place to identify what it will be used for, if fees will be charged like the chapter does. She made mention of insurance and other issues before it can be used. Thereafter, lots of conversation ensued wherein the Commander asked does this mean I have to tell the Commanders they can't use the building.

Answer from various individuals (Tommy Yazzie, Udall Gibson, Sr., Robin Wood, Delsey Morgan, Judy Platero, TCVO Secretary Gibson, Darlene Wilson, and

Vivinita Bennett) confirmed that before the Veterans Building can be utilized, a Facility Usage Management Plan has to be developed and in place; therefore, there will be no outsiders to use the building. The building will not be available to be used by any entity and or person. Vivinita, the Chapter Coordinator promised TCVO Secretary Gibson, she will E-mail a copy of the Chapter's process (Monday, the day after the TCVO meeting) which the Chapter uses as their Facility Usage Management Plan for the chapter. Also, she scheduled an appointment to explain to Secretary Gibson the forms to fill out when expending the TCVO fundraising funds held by the Chapter for budget transfer purposes. (Note: TCVO Secretary hasn't received an E-mail or has met with the Chapter Coordinator) although several reminders were sent as follow-up; in particular, the Chapter's Facility Usage Management Plan to use as a guide and to satisfy the standing of TCVO as a Sub-Committee under the Chapter. Both Chapter Secretary and Chapter Coordinator were insistent upon having TCVO having a usage plan in place. Commander stated that TCVO officers need to sit down

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with the Chapter officials and assist in providing some guidance. Commander further stated that the veterans building will not be used at all and that the next meeting will be at the Chapter house until such usage plan is in place to be followed. Item 1. a-d, Under Old Business has been deferred to the next meeting. Thereafter, another lengthy discussion took place and Tommy Yazzie commented why authorize usage of the building when we're still working on procedures. Chapter Secretary Platero emphasized again the importance of having a Facility Usage Management Plan required by the Chapter for any programs under the Chapter and requested resolutions from TCVO for any and all requests. She stated again that the Chapter expects resolutions for any requests that the chapter will consider acting on for TCVO.

Reports: ENVO: Commander reported he attended the ENVO meeting and read from his notes on topics discussed and stated that a document regarding Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct from the Office of the President was basically rejected and subject to dismissal because many veterans whose religious beliefs may conflict with this code of Conduct. It is not clear who, what, when, where or why this topic was even put out to an unsuspecting audience when there are too many more important topics, issues, concerns and complaints that are being ignored that the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration should be addressing. Commander explained that it was not well received by the Eastern Commanders. Consensus was if Dr. Buu and Bobbie Ann want the veterans to follow their tenets, which they don't even conduct themselves according to these values and principles, why expect the veterans to be held to a higher standard. Eastern Commanders want this code of conduct be tossed out and see the current administration exemplify any leadership and show some respect to the veterans and their surviving spouses. TCVO will submit a resolution to support Eastern Commanders rejection. Commander explained that throughout the discussions today, TCVO has been covered.

TLAC is still needing volunteers to help set up shed to cook in and to help with sales explained Secretary Gibson. Needed are food items. Delsey Morgan has delivered case of spam and more 'to go' paper plates. If folks donate, please drop off items at the chapter house. The staff are good about accepting for TCVO and they contact the Commander what is available for pick up. We need to set a date for our next fundraising food sale. We haven't done one in more than a couple months and have depleted the funds raised. There was discussion and it was decided that since the chapter is having a Christmas dinner on the 13th and other activities are planned by families, any fundraising will be until January. Near beginning of the meeting, Secretary Gibson requested to have a discussion on TCVO having a Christmas activity added to the agenda which was approved by the motioning party to add. A discussion was held and it was decided not to have any activity for Christmas but to plan for Valentines Day.

Chapter Officials. Chapter Secretary Platero explained that the veterans building is valued at \$4.5 million. Recently, the chapter paid \$52,000 up front for the flood damage and inventory by Risk Management. She covered all the paid services and commented on the recent budget transfer request she deemed not properly done. Vivinita Bennett, Coordinator came in at the time Secretary Platero was reporting and Ms. Bennett seemingly was not in a good mood and began addressing the audience that all she hears are complaints! She added on to Secretary Platero's comments on resolutions supporting request for budget transfer which she assisted the Commander with. The Commander had the resolutions on him to present to the Chapter officials but instead, the chapter secretary and coordinator both kept harping on paperwork not submitted properly and or resolutions didn't accompany requests. At this point, the Commander basically interrupted both officials to listen and addressed Ms. Bennett that he didn't appreciate her bursting onto the scene to make comments on the complaints. As it turned out, Ms. Bennett apologized for her action in reference to complaints she says is all she hears or receives. She proceeded to say she will E-mail the Chapter's Facility Management Plan "tomorrow" to TCVO Secretary Gibson to use as a guide in establishing TCVO's Facility Usage Management Plan. Herman Yellowhorse commented that TCVO should probably not open the veterans building to anyone until all necessary paperwork has been completed. For now, there's been discussion to figure out the use of the facility. He advised to wait until everything has been put in place as we heard about liability insurance and such things. At this time, Tommy Yazzie asked all Veterans to stand. Several veterans in attendance stood. He then thanked them for standing and commented that what is going on is just a back-and-forth situation and we are all here knowing we have a building! No report from Council Delegate as he wasn't in attendance.

Concerns – Comments: Commander asked attendees if anyone had a concern. Since no one had a concern or comment, he said he did and proceeded to say that he's not

done this before, but burst out with obscenity to Herman Yellowhorse and

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at the same time, made an obscene gesture (a middle finger) to the former Chapter Vice President! This stunned the audience. Commander then said that he is resigning as Commander because he is sick and tired of being criticized for trying to do a job.... He proceeded to explain that he has a full-time job now and doesn't have time to gather information or basically, has no time for all that's required of being a Commander. He stated he will submit his resignation in January 2026 and will have that on the agenda for the next meeting. He requested to pick a Commander. Commander then stated to possibly adjourn. Secretary Gibson told him to knock it off and to get back on the agenda. Sally Antonio commented to stay on. Raymond Kien, Jr., stated to the Commander that what he just said and did wasn't appropriate. Robin Wood stated that being in a position where you're either appreciated or criticize sometimes breaks us or makes us stronger. His comments were words of encouragement. Delsey Morgan commented that she understands the frustration involved because she was part of the program before and that it is a thankless job; but that at same time, to lead by example. She is thankful for the veterans building and we all need to help one another. She then presented a gift of a flag to the Commander to be hung in the building. The flag was shown to attendees and Secretary Gibson was given the flag to be hung. Secretary Gibson mentioned that she asked the Chapter to have their maintenance man hang pictures but hasn't received word if

New Business: 1. Commander read the revised Fund Management Plan of TCVO and Chapter for FY'26. This was deferred from last month's meeting. After reading the amended Plan, he promised Secretary Gibson he will provide her the updated amendment. Motion by Udall Gibson, Sr., 2nd by Tommy Yazzie: **Yea, 21; Nay, 0; Abstain, 6.** 3. This item was deleted from agenda since TCVO is not certain of what's with Trust Funds at the Agency and Window Rock. Veterans applying for assistance from the Trust Funds account is unknown but understand that some financial assistance request was given to folks who weren't on the 31 TCVO veterans list. Trust Funds was reserved for eligible veterans who had their paperwork completed and on the 31 veterans list from Thoreau. Commander told the veterans to contact the Agency by going there or by phone.

The following resolutions added are as follows:

TCVO-FY26-008 Budget Transfer Request; TCVO-FY-006, Motion by Tommy Yazzie, 2nd by Udall Gibson, Sr.: **Yea, 20, Nay 0; Abstain 8.**

TCVO-FY26-009 Pay T&R Market for groceries (\$956.56) Motion by Udall Gibson, Sr., 2nd by Tommy Yazzie: **Yea, 21, Nay 0; Abstain 4.**

TCVO-FY26-010 Pay Color Guard (\$400) Motion by Fran Brown, 2nd by Henry

Hildreth, Jr. **Yea, 20, Nay 0; Abstain 4.**

Approve stipend payments for TCVO Officers: December 7, 2025 for TCVO officers; approve stipend for ENVO meeting for Commander on December 10, 2025. Motion by Tommy Yazzie, 2nd by Udall Gibson, Sr., **Yea, 18, Nay 0; Abstain 3.**

Set next meeting date: January 4, 2025, 8am-1:00pm.

Announcements: The announcements on agenda were read.

Adjournment @ 13.30 (1:30). Motion by Robin Wood, 2nd by Herman Yellowhorse: By Consensus with a loud YAY!

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Rosemary Gibson

Rosemary Gibson, Secretary

cc: Fleurette Brown (requested meeting notes transcription)