VA DoD Veteran Link App
User Manual

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Connected Care

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User Manual

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Overview

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) VA DoD Veteran Link mobile application (app) allows Veterans receiving VA health care and service members to find and communicate with other Veterans and service members who have common interests and life circumstances. App users can create a profile indicating the personal information they want to share, find information about health-related issues, search for other Veterans and service members based on information they have shared and join groups to discuss specific topics with others.

This app is available for iOS, Android and Windows operating systems, and is supported by these Internet browsers:

1. Internet Explorer 10 and higher

2. Safari 7 and higher

3. Firefox 24 and higher

4. Google Chrome 30 and higher

This user manual provides an in-depth, step-by-step guide for using the VA DoD Veteran Link App.

The Basics

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Prerequisites

To use the VA DoD Veteran Link App, you must have ID.me, DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) or My Health*e*Vet Premium Account credentials. VA DoD Veteran Link accesses your VA Electronic Health Record (EHR) and therefore, for your security, requires ID.me, DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) or My Health*e*Vet Premium Account credentials.

- If you do not have a ID.me, DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) or My Health*e*Vet Premium Account, or you are not sure, visit **mobile.va.gov/login-information** for more information.

Logging in

You may log into VA DoD Veteran Link with ID.me, DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) or My Health*e*Vet Premium account credentials.

- ID.me Account users: Access VA DoD Veteran Link > You will arrive at an Identity Provider Selection screen, and tap **ID.ME** > You will arrive at a Secure Login Redirect screen > Tap **Accept** to proceed (or tap **Cancel** to return to the Identity Provider Selection screen) > You will arrive at an ID.me Sign In screen > Enter your email address and password, and tap **Sign in** > You will see a license agreement screen > Read the End User License Agreement ("EULA") and Notice of Privacy Practices ("Notice") > Tap **Accept**, and you will proceed into the app.

- DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account users: Access VA DoD Veteran Link > You will arrive at an Identity Provider Selection screen, and tap **DS LOGON** > You will arrive at a Secure Login Redirect screen > Tap **Accept** to proceed (or tap **Cancel** to return to the Identity Provider Selection screen) > You will arrive at a DS Logon screen > Enter your DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account username and password > Tap **Login** > You will see a license agreement screen > Read the End User License Agreement ("EULA") and Notice of Privacy Practices ("Notice") > Tap **Accept**, and you will proceed into the app.

- My Health*e*Vet Premium Account users: Access VA DoD Veteran Link > You will arrive at an Identity Provider Selection screen, and tap **MY HEALTHEVET** > You will arrive at a Login to My Health*e*Vet screen > Enter your My Health*e*Vet Premium Account User ID and password > Tap **Login** > You will see a license agreement screen > Read the End User License Agreement ("EULA") and Notice of Privacy Practices ("Notice") > Tap **Accept**, and you will proceed into the app.

NOTE: If this is your first time using a VA app that requires a DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account, you may have to provide your Right of Access as part of the log in process. The app will prompt you if this is necessary. If it is necessary, you will be taken to a Right of Access screen > Read the Request for Access to Your Health Information > If you would like to continue, tap **Next** > You will go to a Review screen > Read VA Form 10-5345a > If you agree, tap **Verify** to "sign" the form > You will proceed into the app.

NOTE: You can access the VA DoD Veteran Link App either directly or through the VA Launchpad. The VA Launchpad contains links to all VA apps that access information from your VA Electronic Health Record (EHR). By signing into the VA Launchpad once with your DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account credentials, you can access multiple apps without signing into each app separately. If you are accessing the VA DoD Veteran Link App through the VA Launchpad and have already signed into another app, you will not need to re-enter your credentials.

Getting to know the screen

When you log into the VA DoD Veteran Link App, you will see your profile and the groups you have joined (**NOTE:** If this is your first time using the app, the Take a Tour feature will appear as a pop-up window and guide you through the app's features). There are also two slide-out menus that allow you to navigate the app:

- App Options (three-line icon in upper left corner) – Access My Profile, Search, Groups and Personal List.
- User Menu (three-line icon with silhouette in upper right corner) – Access About, Help, Take a Tour, Launchpad and Logout.
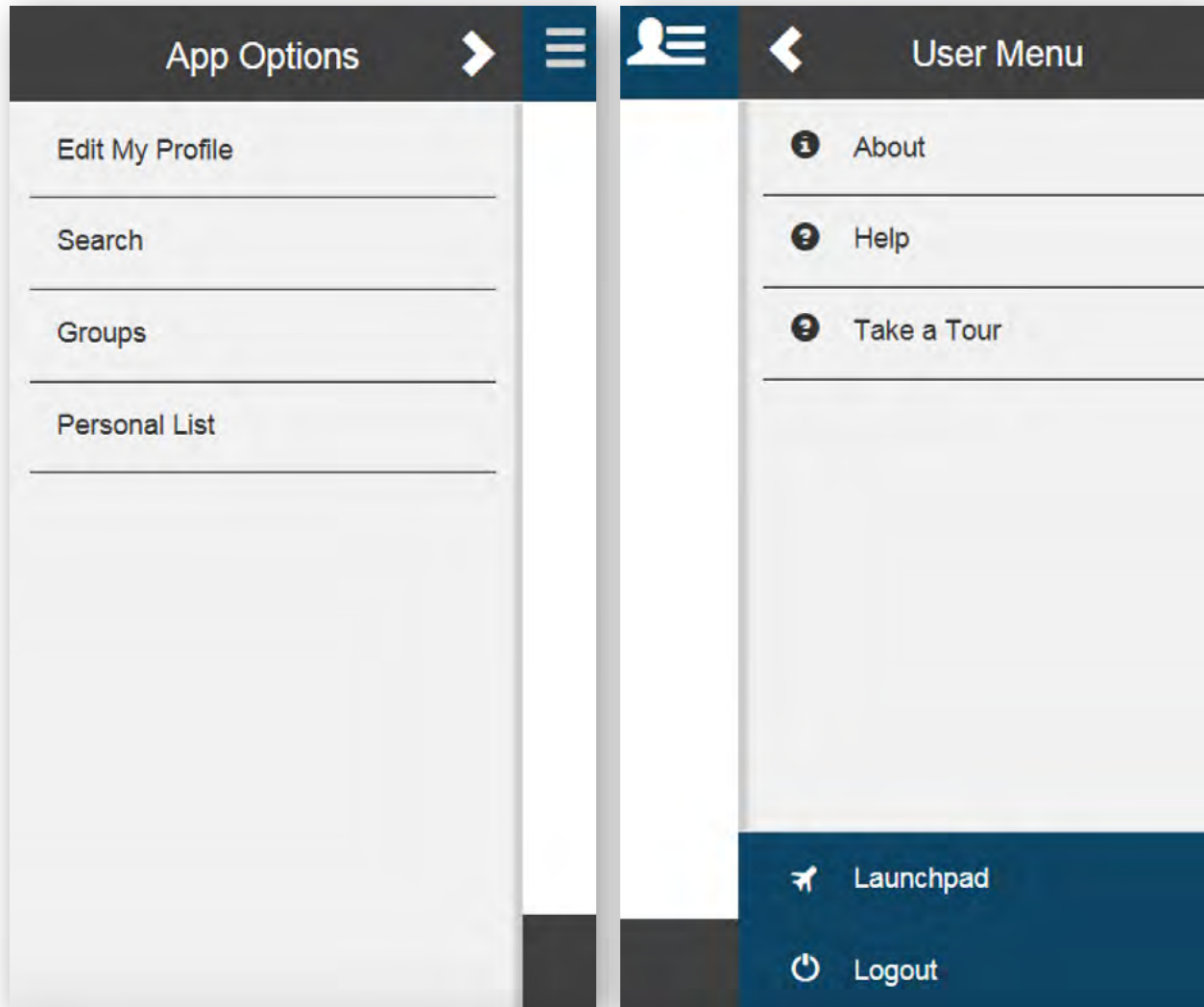
Learning about the app

Tap the User Menu (three-line icon with silhouette in upper right corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **About** > A pop-up About box will appear that provides the version number of and background information about the app. You can also re-read the EULA by tapping on the hyperlink. To close the About window, tap **OK**.

Getting help for the app

Tap the User Menu (three-line icon with silhouette in upper right corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **Help** > A pop-up Help box will appear that provides the Help Desk phone number, a link to provide feedback, the Crisis Line phone number and a link to a built-in user guide. To close the Help window, tap **OK**.

Touring the app

Tap the User Menu (three-line icon with silhouette in upper right corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **Take a Tour** > A pop-up Take a Tour box will appear > Tap the forward and back arrows to progress through the tour > Tap **Close** to close the pop-up, and tap **Don't show this again** to not show the pop-up Tour App box again when you log in.

Accessing the Launchpad

Tap the User Menu (three-line icon with silhouette in upper right corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **Launchpad**.

Logging out

Tap the User Menu (three-line icon with silhouette in upper right corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **Logout**.

Profile

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When you first log into the app, you will have to create a user profile, which you can update at any time. You do not have to fill out all of the profile information, but the ability of other users to match to your characteristics and interests will be limited if you do not provide many details. You will be able to designate the information that you would like to make visible to others. The only information you are required to share in your profile is your screen name, but the more information you share, the easier it will be for other Veterans and service members to find you when they are searching for people with whom to connect. **NOTE:** To use this app, you *must* create a profile.

Creating and updating your profile

The first time you log into the app you will see a pop-up Create Profile box > Tap **Create Profile**, and you will go to the My Profile screen where you can enter and edit your information. To access the My Profile screen from the Home screen, tap the App Options menu (three-line icon in upper left corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **My Profile** > Fill out:

- Screen Name – Type in the screen name you would like to use, which can be up to 20 characters (letters, numbers, and/ or special characters). **NOTE:** Your screen name is always shared and searchable by others, so it should be something that does not identify you directly. For example, you would not want to put real your name as the screen name (Joe Smith), but might use a nickname or other term (e.g., Smitty, Smitty2, Mighty Joe or Army Guy). Each screen name is unique, so if you choose one that is already in use, select another name or add to the existing name to make it unique. For example, if Gunner is used, try Gunner100.

- First Name – Type your full first name.

- Last Name – Type your full last name.

- Date of Birth – Type in your date of birth or tap on the calendar icon next to the MM/DD/YYYY bar > A pop-up calendar box will appear > Use the forward and back arrows to go forward and backward by month, year or decade, and tap your date of birth.

- Gender – Tap the circle next to either Female or Male.

- Affiliation – Tap the blank Affiliation bar > A drop-down menu will appear > Tap either **Air Force**, **Army**, **Coast Guard**, **Marine**, **Navy**, **Public Health** or **Other**.

- Status – Tap the blank Status bar > A drop-down menu will appear > Tap either **Active Duty**, **Family Member**, **National Guard**, **Reserve**, **Veteran** or **Other**.

- Military Rank – Tap the blank Military Rank bar > A drop-down menu will appear with options that correlate to your affiliation > Tap the option that applies to your rank.

- Country – Tap the blank Country bar > A drop-down menu will appear > Tap the country where you currently reside.

- State – Tap the blank State bar > A drop-down menu will appear > Tap the state or territory where you currently reside.

- City – Type in the city where you currently reside.

- Zip Code – Type in your 5-digit United States zip code.

- Home Phone – Type in your 10-digit home phone number.

- Cell Phone – Type in your 10-digit cell phone number.

- Email – Type in your email address.

- Diagnoses – You can enter up to seven diagnoses. Each diagnosis is sharable individually, which will allow other Veterans to find you by a specific diagnosis. The diagnosis will not be shown/displayed to anyone except you, but will be searchable by other Veterans if you share that specific diagnosis. Begin typing in a diagnosis you have > If the diagnosis matches a list of existing diagnoses loaded within the app, the diagnosis will appear > Tap the name of the diagnosis > Tap **Add**. If a diagnosis does not appear when you type, you can still type it in and add it. To remove a diagnoses, uncheck the box to the left of the diagnoses you would like to remove, and the diagnosis will automatically update and be removed from your profile.

- Picture – You can upload an image of yourself to help others recognize you if you choose to share it. The image can be up to 5 megabytes and can be in the following formats: jpeg, jpg, gif or png. Tap **Select a file** > Depending on your device, navigate to and select the image you would like to upload.

- Comments – Type in any comments, reflections, personal biography, etc. up to 250 characters.

Next to each piece of information, you can tap the checkbox in the **Share?** checkbox column if you wish to make that piece of information shareable. If you would only like your screen name to be visible, tap the checkbox next to Go Private. To exit your profile and without saving your changes, tap **Cancel** > A pop-up Confirm box will appear > Tap either **Continue** to proceed without saving, **Return** to return and edit your profile, or **Save** to save the edits to your profile. Tap **Edit My Profile** at any time to make changes to your existing profile. If you save your edits to your profile, a pop-up to Confirm Save Profile box will appear > Tap **Yes** to save your profile or **No** to return and continue editing your profile.

Search

Find other Veterans or service members with common interests and life circumstances, by searching the information they have entered and shared in their profiles.

Using the search feature

Tap the App Options menu (three-line icon in upper left corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **Search**. **NOTE:** If you have not saved your profile changes, you will be prompted to confirm them before continuing. You will go to the Search screen where you can choose up to five search criteria > Tap the blank Search Field bar > A drop-down menu will appear with the Search Field options:

- Screen Name
- First Name
- Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Affiliation

- Status
- Military Rank
- Email
- Home Phone
- Cell Phone
- Diagnosis

- City
- State
- Zip Code
- Country

Tap on the Search Field option you would like to use (**NOTE:** The same search criteria cannot be selected multiple times except for diagnosis. This means that if you select First Name in one search criteria, First Name will no longer be available in the other four search criteria drop-down lists) > Depending on the Search Field you choose, you will either have to type in the field's specific information in the Enter Search Criteria bar, or the bar will turn into another drop-down menu (e.g., if you tap **Status**, you will then have to select either Active Duty, Family Member, National Guard, Reserve, Veteran or Other from the drop-down menu, but if you tap **City**, you will have to type in the City for which you would like to search) > Once you have set your search criteria, tap **Search** (or to clear the search fields, tap **Reset**) > You will go to a Search Results screen and see a list of the Veterans or service members whose shared profile information matched your search criteria > Tap the screen name of the individual about whom you would like to know more > You will go to that individual's detailed profile, where you can see all information he/she has selected to share > Tap **Cancel** to return to the list of search results, or tap **Add to Personal List** to include the person on your Personal List, so you can easily find his/her profile again in the future. (**NOTE:** Search criteria can be a partial match for the search pattern you are looking for, and it should contain at least three characters. For example, if you enter: First Name: Joe; Last Name: Smi; and Affiliation: Air Force, you will see a list of all Veterans who completed and shared those fields. If the search criteria is fewer than three characters, it won't be part of your results. If you are getting too many or too few results, adjust your search criteria.) To exit the search results and begin a new search, tap **Done**.
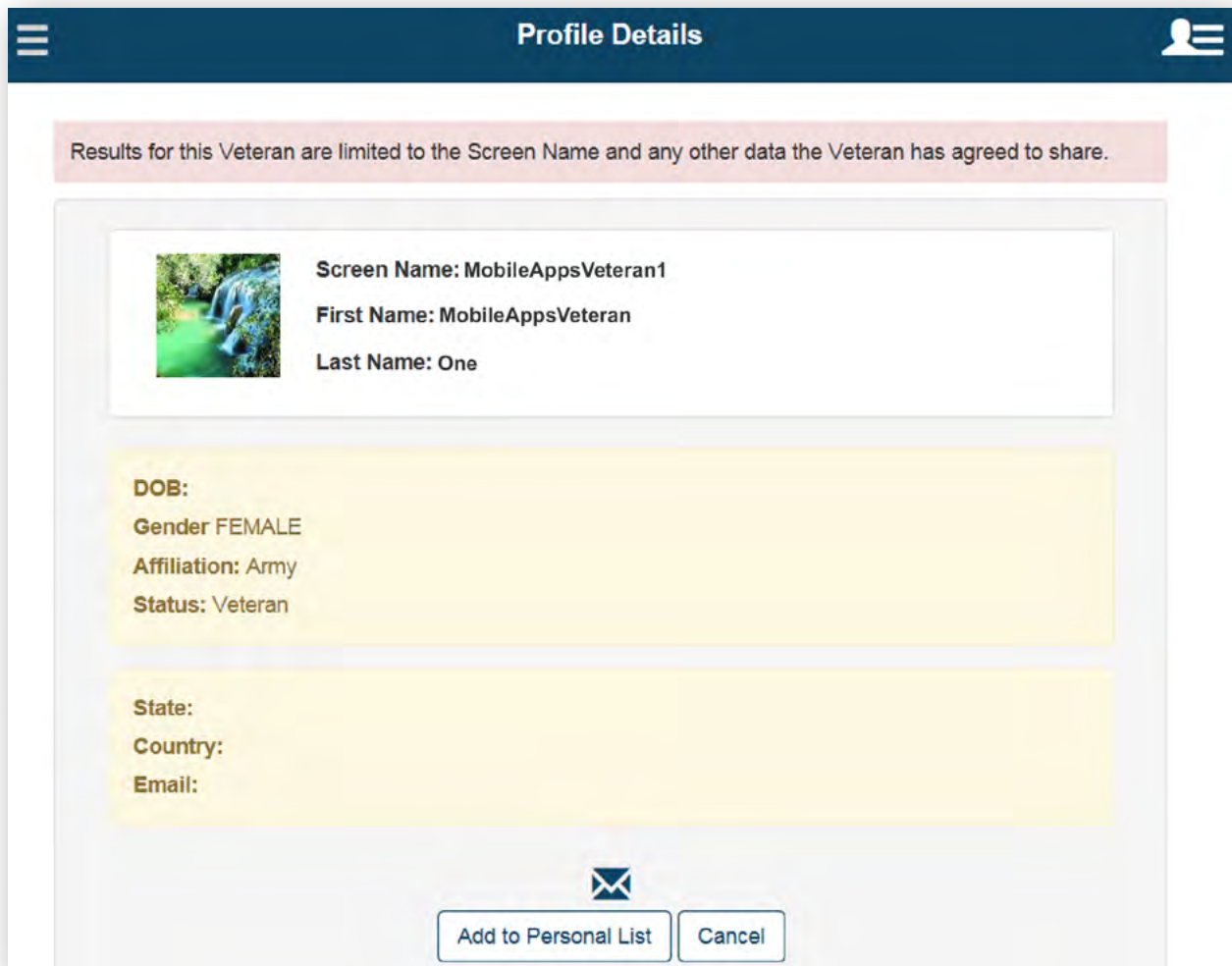
Contacting Veterans/service members

After you have found Veterans/service members with whom you would like to connect, and if they have chosen to share their email address, their profile will show an envelope icon. Tap on the icon, and based on the settings for your mobile device, a new email draft will open up in the email account associated with your mobile device.
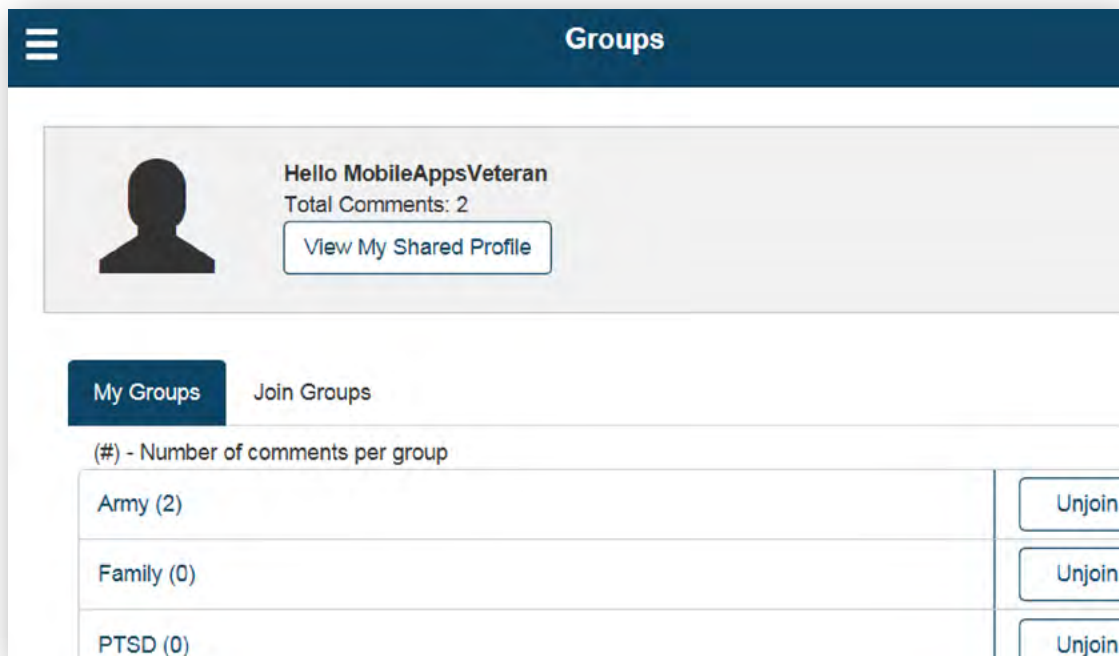
Groups

Find, create and participate in groups about topics that interest you.

Understanding the Groups screen

When you log into the VA DoD Veteran Link App, the screen will default to Groups. You can always revisit the Groups screen by tapping the App Options menu (three-line icon in upper left corner) and tapping **Groups** from the slide-out menu that appears. The Groups screen has two tabs:

1. My Groups – A list of the groups you have joined with the number of comments in parenthesis that have been submitted from group members within the last 30 days.

2. Join Groups – A search feature that allows you to find groups related to topics that interest you and the option to create a new group.

Reading and submitting comments within a group

On the Groups screen, tap the **My Groups** tab > Tap the name of the group where you would like to either read or submit comments > You will go to the group's conversation screen where you will see the comments members have contributed, as well as the date and time they were submitted. To submit a comment, tap **Comment** in the upper left corner of the screen > A pop-up Comment box will appear > Type your comment (up to 250 characters) > Tap **Post** to submit your comment > The Comment box will close, and you will see your comment displayed at the top of the conversation thread.

Comment
Hello!
244 characters remaining
Post   Cancel

Joining groups

On the Groups screen, tap the **Join Group** tab > You will see a list of groups that are available for you to join. If you would like to filter and narrow down this list, enter the name of the group you are looking for into the Search List text box at the top of the screen. If you would like to learn more information about the group (e.g., its purpose and number of members), tap the name of a group to be taken to a screen with information about the group > To return to the list of groups, tap **Close**. Tap **Join** next to the name of a group on the Join Groups tab to join the group > Tap **Continue** to join more groups at that time, or tap **Return** to go to the My Groups tab.

Unjoining groups

On the Groups screen, tap the **My Groups** tab > You will see a list of groups of which you are currently a member > Next to the name of the group you would like to leave, tap **Unjoin** > A pop-up Leave Group box will appear asking if you want to permanently leave the group > Tap **Yes** to leave the group or **No** to remain in the group.

Creating groups

On the Groups screen, tap the **Join Group** tab > Tap **+Create New Group** > A pop-up Create Group box will appear > Enter a group name (which must be unique and not exceed 40 characters) and a group purpose (up to 150 characters) > Tap **Save** > The group will be established, and you will automatically become a member.
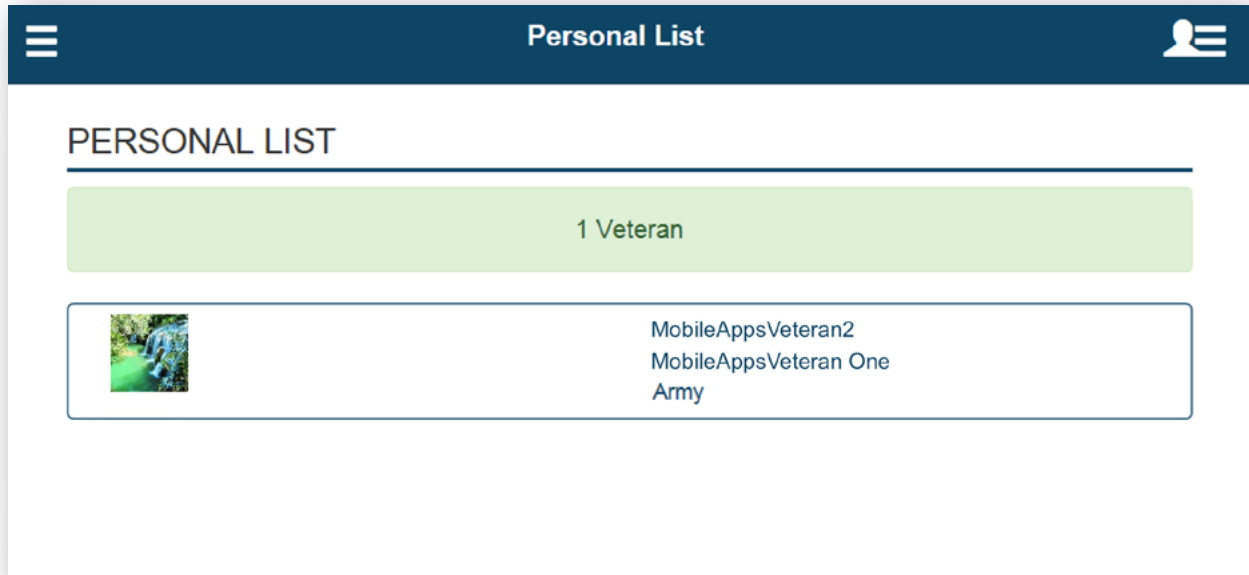
Personal List

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Create a list of favorite contacts, which allows you to save the contacts of people with whom you most frequently converse, have the most in common or have established a close connection.

Accessing your Personal List

Tap the App Options menu (three-line icon in upper left corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **Personal List** > You will be taken to your list of contacts > Tap on an individual's user name to see their profile.

Adding contacts to your Personal List

Find individuals with whom you would like to connect through the Search feature outlined above. Tap the user name of the person with whom you would like to connect > You will go to his/her profile > Tap **Add to Personal List** > The button will change to read "Remove from Personal List," and the person's name will appear in your Personal List the next time you access the list from the App Options menu.

Removing contacts from your Personal List

Tap the App Options menu (three-line icon in upper left corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **Personal List** > You will be taken to your list of contacts > Tap the user name of the person you would like to remove > You will go to his/her profile > Tap **Remove from Personal List** > The button will change to read "Add to Personal List," and the person's name will no longer appear in your Personal List the next time you access the list from the App Options menu.

Help and Additional Information

Additional Training Materials for the VA DoD Veteran Link App

More resources, such as a Quick Start Guide, Slideshow and FAQs, can be found on ***mobile.va.gov/appstore***, and search for the app to access the resources. To open the app's Help section, tap the User Menu (three-line icon with silhouette in upper right corner) > A slide-out menu will appear > Tap **Help** > A pop-up Help box will appear with a link to a built-in User Guide to help you navigate the app.

Help Desk Information

If you need help with the VA DoD Veteran Link App, dial **1-877-470-5947** to speak with a VA representative. The Help Desk is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT. For TTY assistance, dial 711. For clinical questions regarding your personal medical information, please contact your VA care team.

ID.me Help

If you have questions about your ID.me account, visit ***www.id.me/about***.

DS Logon Help

If you have questions about your DS Logon account, visit ***mobile.va.gov/dslogon*** or dial **1-800-983-0937** for assistance.

My Health*e*Vet Help

If you have questions about your My Health*e*Vet Account, visit ***https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/user-login*** or dial **1-877-327-0022** for assistance.

Emergencies

If you feel that your information may have been compromised, contact your local VA facility to obtain the contact information for your Privacy Officer. To locate your local VA facility, visit VA's Facility Locator: ***http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1***. Note that you should never use this app in an emergency situation. If you encounter an emergency, call your local medical center or dial 911.

Appendices

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Appendix #1: Project References

This app was developed according to an approved concept paper. The app was tested in a demo environment to ensure optimal functionality. Subject matter experts who served in the VA DoD Veteran Link App's creation are: John D. Hixson, MD, Susan Woods, MD, and Bryan Gibson et al.

Appendix #2: Glossary

App – An application, or software program, that can be accessed through a website or mobile device and is designed to fulfill a particular purpose.

DS Logon (Department of Defense Self-Service Logon) – A secure logon ID, created by the Department of Defense (DoD), that verifies the identities of individuals affiliated with DoD or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and allows them to access secure websites and digital resources across DoD and VA using a single username and password.

> **DS Logon Level 1 (Basic) Account:** Provides limited access to website features.

> **DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account:** Offers the highest level of access to website features. (NOTE: You must have a DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account to use VA's mobile apps.)

> **EULA:** End User License Agreement.

VA – Department of Veterans Affairs.

VA Mobile Health – An initiative that aims to improve Veterans' health by providing technologies to expand care beyond the traditional office visit and that includes the creation of secure mobile apps to leverage the popularity of wireless technologies to support Veterans, Caregivers and VA care teams. [More at: mobile.va.gov]