

FEDERAL HEALTHCARE

MY HEALTHEVET SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

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In April 2022, By Light was awarded the My HealthVet (MHV) Development, Security and Operations (DevSecOps) \$82M Firm-Fixed-Price contract by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the continued support and development of VA's Veteran-facing electronic health portal. Previously (June 2012), By Light was awarded the MHV Core Development support contract. In subsequent years, By Light won additional contracts to support the hosting and then sustainment of MHV. Spearheaded by Bill Sackewitz, Senior Vice President Digital Transformation Healthcare, and Matt Bain, MHV Program Director, Team By Light spent the last 10 years pioneering, evolving, implementing, and training the MHV team, producing a highly effective team that delivers on VA business and IT objectives. Several By Light MHV teammates were interviewed to find out what makes By Light's MHV team so effective.

Bobby Bailey knew he wanted to join By Light's MHV team straight from his interview, when he saw how passionate and caring the MHV team members were. Bobby grew up helping and serving his mom, who had autoimmune disease issues. He always wanted to work on a project that makes a difference—like serving Veterans—while he improves himself. He is grateful to By Light for opening that door for him.

By Light further opened doors for Bobby by supporting his dream to specialize in user accessibility. Bobby says he is pursuing accessibility, “because everybody at some point is going to have some type of disability. Our eyesight, hearing, motor skills, and cognitive abilities may all weaken over time. So, accessibility really focuses on creating a better digital world for everyone.” Bobby has been learning more about these different types of disabilities as well as Section 508 laws to ensure MHV is accessible for all users. He says working as a User Experience/User Interface (UX/UI) Researcher and Designer on the MHV portal meets his purpose and passion in life.

Just what *is* MHV? Launched by VA on Veterans Day 2003, the Government’s largest customer-facing web portal provides resources and tools for Veterans, active-duty service members, their dependents, and caregivers. It is a secure environment where Veterans can view and manage their personal health record online as well as access health information, health assessments, and online services. Top features of the portal include messaging with healthcare providers and staff, refilling prescriptions, viewing and downloading personal medical records, and managing upcoming doctor appointments.

Serving more than 6.4 million registered users, the MHV portal is ever evolving. Among the By Light team’s current priorities is integrating MHV with the VA.gov website. By Light’s Bryan Riley, Product Owner, explained that with our recent five-year win, By Light is fulfilling our promise, “to apply the experience and lessons learned from previous MHV feature redesigns across the [MHV] program to smooth the transition to VA.gov processes, tools, and structure.”

Part of Bryan’s job while working on this transition is understanding the unique experiences of Veterans—individual Veteran healthcare challenges—and how those differ from mainstream experience. One way he has done that is by talking with Veterans during his son’s baseball games at a VFW facility.

In preparation for the transfer of patient/medical provider secure messaging interaction from MHV to VA.gov, Bryan seeks to translate the needs of the end users (Veterans) from a business standpoint to requirements for developers to code. He appreciates daily team scrum meetings and interactions with his MHV teammates. Bryan is inspired by this core group of eight to nine people who empower one another and, “have the purpose of truly wanting to help Veterans.”

Arienne Walters, UX Specialist and MHV User Centered Design (UCD) Team Lead/Mentor, also highlighted appreciation for working with teammates who are empowering and truly want to help Veterans. She says By Light’s MHV team is positively impacting the VA community by creating designs that make Veterans’ lives easier. For Arienne, giving back to people who have served our country hits close to home since her husband and grandparents are also Veterans.

Arienne has been interested in web development and psychology her whole life. She started creating websites at age 14, freelancing for friends and businesses, and continued creating websites to work her way to a college degree in Psychology. Her passion for psychology merged with web development when she became more involved with UX, so that Arienne now enjoys the best of both worlds.



Bobby, Bryan, and Arienne each work remotely, as does Mike Moyer, Full Stack Developer for By Light's MHV team for two years. Mike, who has coded since he was a little boy, enjoys problem solving, so becoming a developer was a natural path for him. As Lead Developer, Mike is helping give a facelift to the MHV admin portal (for internal VA employees to perform functions such as verifying Veterans' accounts to upgrade to premium accounts). He enjoys learning new technology, such as the REACT web framework used for MHV, and is energized by teammates being receptive to new ideas and making daily process improvements.

For the MHV team's work week, days start with team scrum calls followed by the detailed work of requirements, removing issues/obstacles, demos, understanding backend technology, etc. To offset the intensity of MHV work, teammates keep the work environment exciting and fun with training opportunities and team-building exercises. For example, every six weeks, the teams have dedicated improvement time built into their sprint schedules to take training, work on new ideas, and prepare for the next increment of work.

The UCD team uses this time to hold a "UX Fun Day." These day-long events have featured team training exercises, design challenges, guest speakers, and team-building games. These changes of pace are great opportunities for teams to increase knowledge and camaraderie.

Each of these four MHV teammates feels their work has a huge impact on Veterans and the VA community. They are proud of being part of By Light, where teammates talk through challenges and ideas and empower one another, resulting in not only a positive work environment but valuable products for VA. Empowerment, support, lightheartedness, commitment to Veterans, and grit combine to make the MHV team a highly effective component of By Light. For more information, go to the MHV website: <https://www.myhealth.va.gov>. ■