



The above mural honoring our Veterans through the era's is on display in our hallway and was created by local artist Galen McCarthy

# VICTOR SIERRA OSCAR COMMO CHECK!

Vol 2 Number 4

"America's Veterans embody the ideals upon which America was founded."

April 2019

This publication is for all Veterans, their families and their communities, compiled solely by the Jackson County Veterans Service Officer. The information provided herein is to keep you informed of upcoming events, newsworthy items and historical data of interest.

Proud member of



MN and National Associations of Veteran Service Officers



"In the aftermath, we are because they were." R.J. Heller,

## OFFICE INFORMATION

The Jackson County Veterans Service Office is located at:

402 White St. (Door 6)  
Jackson, MN 56143  
507.847.4774

[jeff.gay@co.jackson.mn.us](mailto:jeff.gay@co.jackson.mn.us)

Monday 8am-4:30pm  
Tuesday 8am-4:30pm  
Wednesday 8am-Noon  
Thursday 8am-Noon  
Friday Closed

(Available for after hour appointments case-by-case)

[www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans](http://www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans)

You can find us on FaceBook too

## IT TAKES A TEAM! - VETERANS

JEFFREY L. GAY, Jackson County VSO

Saturday, March 16th was the annual Jackson Farm & Home Show. The Veteran Service Office had planned to have a booth but then decided to invite our local Service Organizations to share the area with us. We had representation by Jackson County VFW and Legion Posts to include the Legion Auxiliary & Sons of the American Legion.



Also participating was Marty Kane giving out Vietnam Service pins and certificates to Vietnam Veterans and/or their families. March 29th is National Vietnam Veteran's Day! Included in the booth too was the ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve).

The aim for our being there was to provide information about our office, benefits and the local Service Organizations in Jackson County and what their mission is for Veterans and their families. So much more is done by these organizations than the general public is aware of.

It was a wonderful sight to experience the different organizations who normally do events singularly, or all too often not at all, working together as a team sharing the work and center stage with a flourish of all of their Service Organizational flags joining my military branch flags.

There are other events coming up this year where I hope that we can all work together again and improve upon our efforts as a display of solidarity to our peers and the communities. First and foremost is education, letting others know who and what we are as well as why we exist.



It's a Veteran's choice whether he or she wishes to attend the meetings although we hope they choose to attend. The more important issue is that there is strength in numbers. Your membership increases that number exponentially by "ONE" and each "ONE" is vitally important.

This is true with the VA as well. Even if you don't believe you need VA services your enrollment into the system increases the overall strength of membership and improves our lobbying efforts in Congress for needed benefits. You may even find that there are services and benefits that you qualify for and can begin using! Remember, you're not doing anybody a favor with the mindset of "leaving them for someone else who needs them more". (Continued on Page 2)

Jackson County Veteran Service Office April 2019

The services and benefits have been allocated for you and in "saving" them you're essentially wasting them.

When you see us at an event or in a parade in your community be sure to stop and say hello! What we do we do for our Veterans, their families and our communities

## APRIL SPECIAL DAYS

April is:

**MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD**  
**SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**  
**KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL MONTH**  
**STRESS AWARENESS MONTH**

- 1 - April Fool's Day
- 5 - Gold Star Wives Day
- 9 - **YOUR CVSO ON KKOJ!**
- 14 - Air Force Reserve Birthday
- 15 - Income Tax Day (Taxes are due!)
- 15 - Patriots Day
- 21 - Easter Sunday
- 22 - Earth Day
- 23 - Army Reserve Birthday
- 24 - Administrative Assistant's Day
- 26 - Arbor Day
- 30 - National Military Brats Day



Beginning the 9<sup>th</sup> of April the Jackson County CVSO will be on the KKOJ morning show the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday every month. Tune in but don't

tune out! Question & answer, interesting information, VA Program updates fun facts, straight talk and announcements. This will be geared for all Veterans, their families and Veteran Organizations...

**STAY TUNED - STAY INFORMED!**

**NOTE!** Your Jackson County Veteran Services Office offers a dedicated workstation in our facility VA Telehealth appointments without a charge! Please call 507-847.4774 to schedule its use once you have an appointment with the VA CTH.

## IMPORTANT TIME LIMITS

Time limits are set for a purpose and it is up to you to follow those guidelines or it could cost you money. Please look at these and remember them so if it happens to you you're prepared. Pass it along to other Veterans in case they haven't seen this.

**MEDICAL** ~~ Time to contact VAMC once taken to civilian hospital is **72 hours** following admission to ER or clinic and/or ambulance transport/transfer

**APPEALS** ~~ Once you receive your claim decision letter by mail from the VA **READ IT** and be sure whether or not you agree that it is fair. If you disagree you can file a Notice of Disagreement (NOD) but it must be done in a timely matter. **You have 120 days Appeal** the claim from date of the decision.

**"To survive in peace and harmony, united and strong, we must have one people, one nation, one flag."**  
~ Pauline Hanson

## DISAGREE WITH A CLAIM DECISION?

With the implementation of the VA Appeals Modernization Act on February 19, you have more choice in how you resolve a disagreement with a VA decision. You can also expect a more efficient, timely and transparent process. This new process is the result of years of collaboration between VA, Veterans and Veterans Service Organizations.

Under the new law, Veterans can choose one of three options to have a disagreement reviewed:

- **Option 1: Higher-Level Review Lane** Select this option if there is no additional evidence to submit, but you believe there may have been an error in the initial decision. A more experienced reviewer will take a fresh look at the previous decision and may overturn it.
- **Option 2: Supplemental Claim Lane** Choose this option if you have new and relevant evidence to support a claim. VA will also assist in gathering evidence.
- **Option 3: Appeal Lane** You can appeal directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Visit [VA.gov](http://VA.gov) for more on the new appeals process or click the button below for information on all VA benefits. <https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/>

## LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY



The Fairmont SSA (Social Security Administration) office may possibly receive a hiring opportunity this spring and are reaching out to the local CVSO's to get the message out to Veterans. For more information on the two positions that may be available (one or the other more than likely), please refer to Jackson CVSO Facebook Page or contact me directly at 507-847-4774, I have fact sheets available. There may be a position in the Mankato office as well.

Please refer to the below address to submit your resumes. You may either via drop off at the local SSA office, via USPS mail or fax at **507-238-4794**.

**Social Security Office, Christina Peña**  
400 S State St suite 70; Fairmont, MN 56031

**Office: 877-405-0414 FAX: 507-238-4794**

**Office: 877-405-0414 FAX: 507-238-4794**

Jackson County Veteran Services FaceBook Link:  
[www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices/](http://www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices/)

**Don't forget about your Veteran's Preference when you're applying - It may make the difference!**



## VA strengthens care and benefits for Veterans with \$220 billion budget

**WASHINGTON** — President Donald J. Trump is proposing a total of \$220.2 billion in his fiscal year (FY) 2020 budget for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), a 9.6 percent increase above fiscal 2019.

“The budget request will ensure the nation’s Veterans receive high-quality health care and timely access to benefits and services,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The budget supports the most significant transformation of VA since its inception, positioning the department as the premier provider for Veterans’ services and benefits. This is a significant increase in VA funding and demonstrates the administration’s commitment to supporting our Veterans.”

### Budget highlights

The FY 2020 budget includes \$97 billion (an increase of \$6.8 billion, or 7.5 percent) in discretionary funding, including resources for health care, benefit administration, and national cemeteries, as well as \$123.2 billion (an increase of \$12.3 billion or 11.1 percent) in mandatory funding above 2019 for benefit programs inclusive of Compensation and Pensions, Readjustment Benefits, Housing and Insurance. This budget provides robust funding for the secretary’s top priorities.

**MISSION Act:** \$8.9 billion for implementation of the Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (MISSION Act) to provide greater choice on where Veterans receive their care, maintain care for current Choice Program users, provide a new urgent care benefit and expand the Caregivers program.

**Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM):** \$1.6 billion (\$496 million above FY 2019) to create and implement a single longitudinal electronic health record for military service members from their active duty to Veteran status, and ensure interoperability with the Department of Defense. The increase will support ongoing activities at the three initial deployment sites and the deployment to further sites, as well as additional site assessments.

**Transforming Business Systems:** Funds the continued deployment of a modern integrated financial and acquisition management system (\$184.9 million) and implementation of the Defense Medical Logistics Standard Support (\$36.7 million).

**Improving Customer Service:** \$8.1 million to maintain VA’s trajectory of improving its customer service. The results of a recent customer-experience feedback survey of Veterans regarding their trust of the department’s

health care outpatient services showed “trust scores” for outpatient services increased from 84.7 percent in June 2017 to 87.9 percent in January 2019.

**Preventing Veteran Suicide:** \$9.4 billion (\$426 million above 2019) for mental health services, which includes \$222 million for suicide-prevention outreach, a \$15.6 million increase over 2019.

**Women’s Health:** \$547 million (\$42 million above 2019) for gender-specific women’s health care. This increase will help meet VA’s goals of developing Designated Women’s Health Primary Care Providers at every site where women access VA care, and improve the availability and quality of services to women Veterans.

**Capital Investments:** \$1.6 billion for major and minor construction, including \$410 million for the construction of a new hospital in Louisville, Kentucky, and \$150 million for the Manhattan, New York, medical center. Budget materials are available here: [www.va.gov/budget/products.asp](http://www.va.gov/budget/products.asp)

**“A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.” – Christopher Reeves**

## A LITTLE WWII HISTORY

**The Battle of Iwo Jima** began 74 years ago on Feb. 19, 1945, as thousands of Marines landed on a beach of volcanic ash in the Pacific. For five weeks, Marines, Navy Corpsmen and Seabees fought for control of the heavily-fortified island.

**Medal of Honor recipient** Woody Williams recalls the battle in this six-part series which will be released on VA’s social media channels through March 26. **CLICK the links below to watch and share with other Veterans all four episodes.**

- 1) [www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/videos/403120147122396/](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/videos/403120147122396/)
- 2) [www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/videos/839935316358805/](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/videos/839935316358805/)
- 3) [www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/videos/536881170137380/](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/videos/536881170137380/)
- 4) [www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/videos/356973304913835/](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/videos/356973304913835/)

**Know your History:** The first African-American to receive the Medal of Honor in the Civil War was Sgt. William Harvey Carney who, despite being shot in the face, shoulders, arms and legs, refused to let the American Flag touch the ground.



For more go to: [www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/carney-william-h-1840-1908/](http://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/carney-william-h-1840-1908/)

## SPEAKING OF HISTORY!

**First and foremost we celebrate** two service branch birthdays this month, the US Air Force Reserve and the Army Reserve. **Kudos to all who serve!** We all

appreciate what both the Active Duty forces and Reserve (including the Guard) does to protect our freedoms.

The Army Reserve celebrates 111 years strong being founded in 1908! [www.usar.army.mil](http://www.usar.army.mil)



Founded in 1948 the US Air Force Reserve celebrates 70 years! [www.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/AFRC-History/](http://www.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/AFRC-History/)

Another service branch most of us don't necessarily consider as a combat force is the US Coast Guard. We think of it as patrolling our water locked borders and performing search and rescue operations.

Well, obviously we were all mistaken as the USCG Cutter Bertholf spent nearly 90 days being deployed to the East China Sea to keep tabs on North Korea.



The Coast Guard helps enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions on North Korea by keeping a lookout for prohibited ship-to-ship transfers of fuel, such as coal, and other goods.

Its unclear if the Bertholf had interrupted any illicit transfers but its presence reinforces our commitment to keeping the East China Sea open to navigation.

The Bertholf, first of the Coast Guard's new National Security cutters, left its homeport of Alameda, Calif., with its crew of 170 on Jan. 20 for deployment in the Western Pacific. They have returned to their homeport in Alameda, Calif., following a nearly 90-day deployment,

**Did you know there are health perks to donating blood?**

In addition to helping others who experience multiple emergent and catastrophic health issues, some medical experts advise.

- 1) Blood donors are **88% less likely to suffer a heart attack** (American Journal of Epidemiology) because repeated blood donations may help with better blood flow.
- 2) You also have a **mini physical** before giving blood.
- 3) Perhaps the best benefit is **doing good for others** can lead to a **longer life** (Health Psychology).

**So---how about donating a pint when the community bloodmobile comes to town?**

**"Here at home, when Americans were standing in long lines to give blood after the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, we squandered an obvious opportunity to make service a noble cause again, and rekindle an American spirit of community."** ~ Joe Biden

**"After I was discharged from the military, it was difficult trying to become a civilian."**

~ Chris Kyle

**WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!**

JEFFREY L. GAY, Jackson Co. CVSO

The above quote by Chris Kyle speaks volumes about our military men and women returning home from deployments.



We are all Veterans and we have all suffered something like this in one manner or another and we've all dealt with these feelings in various ways.

Our civilian counterparts, having never been in our situation, may not have as firm a grasp on what we are experiencing as we do and have a difficult time understanding our outbursts, quiet times, self-imposed seclusion and an innate need to reach out to other Veterans. **They "get it"!**

In most cases we deal with these issues as positively as we can with familial support. Other times we take to the more conventional treatment received by a doctor (MD and/or PhD) as well as attending support groups or having a "buddy" to have our back.

All too often, however, a person can be drawn to a dark place and unable to find a means to lift themselves up again and often times refuse to seek help. When this occurs we may or may not be able to see it mostly because they don't want to bother us or make us worry or suffer with them.



I have dealt with more Veterans than I care to count (although I do) who have been drawn to considering ending their suffering in a means none of us wish to see. I've experienced these ideations go both ways. I've encountered the reel of emotions by the Veteran and the family to include a family doing nothing because they cannot face the fact that their Veteran may be suicidal, even though all the warning signs are there.

Those who reach out for help, whether it's the Veteran or the family, have a better chance of success at finding resolve thus a better outcome. We cannot consciously be blind to the signs and turn away for whatever the reason. We need to accept the fact that the issue exists and work together to relieve the symptoms.

It's far more difficult when someone has made peace with the idea and chosen to act on it. Seldom are there signs in this situation to alert us to a problem. We need to not be shy and to ask difficult questions and closely monitor the responses.

As we consider suicide it's often inferred that it is a selfish act as they leave family behind in the wake of their actions. We don't know the true extent of their suffering and therefore consider it to be unfair of us.



**Taking that stance is unfair to the person.** We are casting the blame for how we feel and not considering how they may have been struggling with issues we'll probably never know. In many cases they do it to spare you the suffering of seeing them suffer.

### Who really is the victim in these cases?

Think about it. It's a valid question. The grief and suffering is shared by all parties including friends, family, extended family, co-workers and not to mention pets.

**STATISTICAL FACT: An estimated 22 Veterans take their lives daily.**

### What can we do?

We can take the initiative to learn the normal warning signs. If you think you see them do essentially nothing, call a professional.

- [Call 911, the Police are trained to handle these situations. Don't worry about feeling like your intruding on the person, anger passes.](#)
- You may also, recommended if the person is inferring suicidal thoughts, call the Veterans Crisis Line. It's answered 24 hours daily by professionals trained to listen and then talk.  
**800-273-8255 or text to "838255"**

As an organization (i.e. Legion, VFW, Rotary, Lions, etc.) we can suicide sponsor awareness classes for our membership or even open this information up for the general public to learn the signs and what to do. In this scenario it would be good to contact regional subject matter experts. For this information you can call your law enforcement, CVSO, hospital, etc.

Below is a link to a Washington Post article showing a new approach at taking steps to help in this crisis.

[www.washingtonpost.com/national/veterans-talking-veterans-back-from-the-brink-a-new-approach-to-policing-and-lives-in-crisis/2019/03/20/c1add29e-4508-11e9-8aab-95b8d80a1e4f\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.f0e52d548524](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/veterans-talking-veterans-back-from-the-brink-a-new-approach-to-policing-and-lives-in-crisis/2019/03/20/c1add29e-4508-11e9-8aab-95b8d80a1e4f_story.html?utm_term=.f0e52d548524)

As Veterans and as citizens we can make a difference by learning the signs, alerting someone if you see concerning actions, displaying compassion as you talk with them and remember, it's not only Veterans, the epidemic includes all people, to include children, and those of all walks of life.



**Take time to listen more than talk, don't give advice or express opinions, stay neutral, keep them safe, keep them calm and call for help if needed. DO NOT involve yourself any further for everyone's safety.**

Below are just a couple of links to begin the process or understanding the issues and the signs. There are many more out there!

- [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/veterans-crisis-line.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/veterans-crisis-line.asp)
- [www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/suicide/symptoms-causes/syc-20378048](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/suicide/symptoms-causes/syc-20378048)
- <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/what-to-look-for/suicidal-behavior>

Don't forget, these are hypertext links. You can copy and paste these links to your browser or you may hover your cursor over the link, hold down the "Ctrl" button and simultaneously press the "Enter" key.

*"I didn't want to wake up. I was having a much better time asleep. And that's really sad. It was almost like a reverse nightmare, like when you wake up from a nightmare you're so relieved. I woke up into a nightmare."*

~ Ned Vizzini

### **"TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME"**

April is the first hint of Spring and with Spring comes baseball! If you're a Veteran and are looking for a discount to a Twins game you're in luck! You can go online to [www.military.com/discounts/military-discounts-for-major-league-baseball-games.html?ESRC=eb\\_190319.nl](http://www.military.com/discounts/military-discounts-for-major-league-baseball-games.html?ESRC=eb_190319.nl)



Speaking of discounts there are all sorts of discounts you can get as a Veteran. However, each one has it's own rules for proving your Veteran status. One sure proof is your official military ID (CAC) card if you're still serving or are a military retiree or dependent.

Other items may be a copy of your discharge with your current driver's license as validation of identity. The same thing may be said of your VA ID card or your **CURRENT** service organization membership card (i.e. Legion, VFW, VVA, AmVets, etc.).

There are a lot of places offering discounts. How do you find out who? A number of ways...

- **Just Ask** – If you are at a restaurant or hotel simply ask them! All they can do is say no but in most cases they will tell you yes...
- **GOOGLE** – GOOGLE the theme park, museum, theater, Zoo or wherever it is you want to go, get their phone number and call them! You may also find the info on their website.
- **List Service** – Often times you will find a list of "military friendly" businesses by word of mouth or by searching on the Internet. Many times [www.military.com](http://www.military.com) will post them.



- **Service Organizations** – If you belong talk to your membership person to see what that organization may offer in the way of discounts.

## **VA UN-EMPLOYABILITY LETTER**

A letter has been mailed to many of you from the Department of Veterans Affairs concerning a new process of verifying your employment status. It has spawned some confusion and some concern.



Generally, if you are receiving compensation due to a disability you must report your Individual Un-employability (UI) status to the VA annually. This was then used to make a determination concerning your continued eligibility,

The process now is that the VA will use a data wage match from the Social Security Administration (SSA) as well as a the US Census Bureau information.

If this process identifies an issue, perceived or not, you will be notified and will have then present evidence to the VA verifying this information.

However, if there is a change in your income and/or employability and you do not report it you are subject to punishment by law and incarceration and your payments may be suspended.

Read your mail carefully and immediately, if you do not understand it or have a question VA related please contact your local CVSO promptly!

***“America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.”***

~ Harry S Truman

## **SPRINGTIME – TO DO OR NOT TO DO...**

Jeffrey L. Gay

I was reading an article this morning on, I believe, [www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com) and they coined a phrase that I'm afraid all to many of us are aware of but don't realize or admit it. **“GYMTIMIDATION”**



I, for one, do suffer from this malady. I have had a gym membership for several years now, dutifully paying the monthly stipend for the privilege. I find that I am

merely donating to their coffers and gaining nothing but the peace of mind knowing that I carry that card! I wish it were tax deductible...

I have gone to the facility maybe a wee bit more than I have fingers on my hands. When I do go I see all those young lithe and muscular bodies running, sweating, lifting and all sorts of things that I want to do.

I look at myself and skulk away with shame on my face and try my best to blend into the walls as I take my leave. In my head I say to myself “that could be a new version of me” if I would only participate. It's not that

anybody shames me it's all about self-flagellation, beating myself for letting myself go for so long.

I eat well! Well, I eat... I eat lots, especially when I'm stressed out or depressed, then I eat more. Thank goodness I essentially quit drinking! I do not follow the regimen my MD prescribes. Ergo, more “girth”, less wind and increased napping.

It's important to keep (or get) yourself in shape, good physical condition. Maybe never to be “Mr. Universe” or an accomplished weight lifter but to a point you feel good physically as well as mentally.

A way to combat “GYMTIMIDATION” is to take advantage of the seasons. Begin slowly but begin, walking outside for instance. Walking has been said to be the most basic and best cardio workout you do.

With the warm weather it's pretty easy to don your sneakers and begin putting one foot in front of the other slowly increasing your cadence (you remember that from the good old days in Basic Training) as you feel comfortable.

Human beings are social animals (except for a select few I've met over the years bartending or as police officer) and as such it's easier to do things when you do them together. Invite a friend or two to join you walking. It's amazing how much you can talk about an problems of the world you can solve as you stroll down the lane. It may even turn into a little friendly competition.

You can then maybe “graduate” to bicycling and interchange it with walking now and then for a change of pace. I'm sorry, I don't mean “bikes” that are motorized... As a side note, a friend I had many years ago (decades even) said he, quote, “I hate bicycling! There's no reason to work hell outa your legs just to give your arse a ride...” I won't tell you why he always took showers instead of baths..... Arnie was quite opinionated and a self-proclaimed pragmatist, to say the least.



In all cases, it's a good thing to track your progress.

Make notes of your time and distance, stop occasionally and take your pulse (NO! Not just to see if you're still alive, count the beats...) and your breaths per minute.

Take water along and hydrate throughout the routine. Simplest way is to count the number of either in a 15 second period and then multiply by four (4).



You can track your progress the old fashioned way with a pad and pencil or there are many apps for your smartphone to make it easier. Don't forget the fitness bracelet, it can do most of this for you, except the movement of one foot in front of your other, you have to do that yourself!

Additionally, it's a good idea to have a pedometer with you too so you can count your steps either while on the walk or overall daily. You may also carry an iPod or MP3 player with your own mix of music to provide a steady beat to follow keeping an even cadence. *...and the beat goes on...* Or you can take the old transistor radio and listen to the news or the game as you go. **STAY AWAY FROM POLITICAL TALK SHOWS**, this is supposed to be a relaxing time expelling anxiety! ☺

All in all, Spring's here and only we can choose to take advantage of it to improve our health, physique and attitude. Nature's a wonderful thing and the birds chirping can make you happy as well as maybe setting your cadence as you walk.

**VERY IMPORTANT!** For all of us confirmed couch potatoes out there,



**DO NOT FORGET TO STRETCH** before you begin any routine or regimen. It helps to prevent injuries.

Alright, I think you get my point.  
Get out there and DO!

DO something that will DO you some good!  
**ANOTHER IMPORTANT WARNING MESSAGE!**  
DO NOT begin any routine before seeing your MD to ensure that it is good for you based on any personal health conditions you might have.

Go here to read a great online article about walking and biking: [www.rydoze.com/biking-vs-walking/](http://www.rydoze.com/biking-vs-walking/) A couple others targeting walking and biking are online at: [www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/a-z/biking-workout](http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/a-z/biking-workout)

The VA has programs for you too, one is "Gerofit" and  is designed for those of us Veterans who aren't as young as we think we still are! Ask your VA provider about this and other programs available or simply go online to: [www.va.gov/geriatrics/gerofit/gerofit\\_home.asp](http://www.va.gov/geriatrics/gerofit/gerofit_home.asp)

**A little more involved...**

As outlined in a couple previous editions of this newsletter the VA has a program called **MOVE**. It's a concise but pretty all-encompassing program to help you become a healthier person through lifestyle changes, diet and exercise. It will help you lose weight too. *There'll be "less of you" to love but you'll love yourself more!*




If you're interested in the **MOVE** program you can go online to [www.move.va.gov/](http://www.move.va.gov/) or call your local VA health provider. This is another program that you may participate via telehealth or CTH.

**BENEFITS, BENEFITS & MORE BENEFITS**

Did I mention "Benefits"? Why I believe I did... As a Veteran there are certain benefits you enjoy and we all give thanks to the Veterans Administration for these.

That's good because a great majority is provided by the VA but our individual States off State sponsored Veteran benefits too.

For a concise listing with an explanation of each you can go online to:  [www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/state-veterans-benefits-directory.html?ESRC=banner.nl](http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/state-veterans-benefits-directory.html?ESRC=banner.nl)

When the page opens there is a list of States, all are hypertext links. You can click on each State and a page will open explaining their State's benefits. Keep in mind though that to receive any of these you must be resident of that State.

Below is a list of the Minnesota State benefits. For more information visit the website above or call your local Veteran Service Officer.

- **Minnesota Veterans Homes Placement**
- **Minnesota Veteran Financial Benefits**
  - **Income Taxes**
  - **Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption**
  - **Short Term Financial Assistance**
- **Minnesota Veteran Employment Benefits**
  - **MN Veterans Preference Act**
  - **MN Veterans Preference Act (VPA)**
- **Minnesota Veteran Education Benefits**
  - **Minnesota GI Bill**
  - **Surviving Spouse & Dependent Education Benefit**
- **Minnesota Veteran Recreation Benefits**
  - **Minnesota State Park Vehicle Permits**
  - **Active Duty Hunting & Fishing Licenses**
  - **Firearms Safety Training**
- **Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries**

If you compare with other states and find something they do that you wish you could have in Minnesota just contact your State Senator. It may be something he/she can bring up and vote on. There's another reason for attending the annual "Veterans Day on the Hill"!

**Keep abreast of your benefits!** Military benefits are ever-changing, keep up with everything from pay to health care by signing up for a free Military.com membership at [www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits](http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits). This will send all the latest benefits straight to your inbox, as well as give you access to up-to-date pay charts and more.



You can also contact your local Veteran Service Officer to review your records. However, it all begins with you

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."  
~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

## REPRESENTATIVE CONTACTS

In the event you wish to contact your senator or congressman below are links to the contact info pages.

### MN State Senate

[www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members/list](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members/list)

### US (MN) Senate and congressional Representatives

<https://mn.gov/portal/government/federal/minnesota-delegation.jsp>



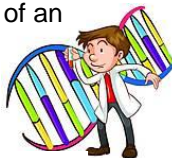
### Straight from the VA!

[www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/)

### Precision health initiative brings genetic testing to Veterans

*VA and Sanford Health join forces to provide free screenings, improve patient care for cancer survivors*

**WASHINGTON** — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that, as part of an innovative partnership, VA and [Sanford Health](#), one of the nation's largest nonprofit health care systems, will soon provide free genetic testing to some Veterans cared for by VA.



The VA PHarmacogenomics Action for cancer Survivorship (PHASeR) testing program will begin a pilot program this year at the Durham VA Health Care System that will enroll all cancer survivors who receive treatment at the facility. The program eventually will expand to enrolling some 250,000 U.S. Veterans at 125 sites.

A [recent Dartmouth study](#) found that VA medical centers "[outperform private hospitals in most health care markets](#) throughout the country."

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie lauded the partnership, and said relationships like this will continue to expand the department's delivery of world class health care.

"This screening test will help providers at the VA prescribe the most appropriate medications at the right dose for cancer survivors," Wilkie said. "Our goal is to continue delivering the best care possible for our nation's heroes, and this partnership helps us do just that."

PHASeR is funded by a \$25 million gift from philanthropist Denny Sanford, for whom the health system is named, and an effort by Sanford Health to raise matching funds. The test can help providers determine which medications will be most effective for patients, improving access to appropriate treatments and reducing adverse drug reactions, which [research](#) shows costs up to \$30 billion per year.

The test results will help with clinical decision making for all types of prescribed medications, including cardiovascular and mental health diseases and pain management. Veterans will be able to access the test at their local VA facilities, and Sanford Health will process the tests at its South Dakota-based Imagenetics facility.

"We have seen firsthand how this testing can positively influence patient care," said Kelby Krabbenhoft, president and CEO of Sanford Health. "Through the generosity of Mr. Sanford, we are proud to join VA to make the test available to our nation's Veterans."

[Sanford Imagenetics](#) began in 2014, and more than 90 percent of patients who have been tested have been found to carry a genetic change that could affect medication selection or dosing. Test results are shared with physicians through the electronic medical record to ensure efficiency and accuracy in choosing treatments.

For more information on the PHASeR testing program resources for Veterans visit:

<https://imagenetics.sanfordhealth.org/veterans-genetic-testing/>.

### VA to make new nasal spray drug available for treatment-resistant depression

**WASHINGTON** — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced its health care providers will now be able to offer the newly approved Spravato nasal spray for treatment-resistant depression.

The treatment will be made available to Veterans based on their individual medical needs combined with providers' clinical assessments.

The move follows the March 5 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of Spravato (*esketamine*) nasal spray. Spravato was approved for use in conjunction with an oral antidepressant for the treatment of treatment-resistant depression in adults.

"We're pleased to be able to expand options for Veterans with depression who have not responded to other treatments," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "It reflects our commitment to seek new ways to provide the best health care available for our nation's Veterans."

Spravato will be available through a restricted distribution system under an FDA-approved Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS). The purpose of the REMS is to mitigate the risks of serious adverse outcomes and the potential abuse and misuse of Spravato.

VA health care providers will monitor Veterans for serious adverse outcomes, such as sedation and difficulty with attention, judgment and thinking (dissociation), abuse and misuse, worsening of depression and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Veterans will self-administer Spravato nasal spray under the direct observation of a health care provider in a certified medical facility, and then must be monitored by

**Jackson County Veteran Service Office April 2019**



a health care provider for at least two hours after receiving their dose. Spravato cannot be dispensed directly to Veterans for use at home.

For additional information on access to Mental Health Support for Veterans, visit VA Mental Health ([www.mentalhealth.va.gov/](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/)). Veterans in immediate crisis may call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 and press 1, text to 838255 or chat online at [www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat).

## MORE EVENTS FOR APRIL AND BEYOND!

Your Sioux Falls VAMC is hosting upcoming events that are open to Veterans and the general public. Some may also be at other locations or on-line as described below.

- **Vietnam Veterans recognition** this **Friday, March 29**, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
- **Chapel rededication** will be followed by an open house **April 23**, 1:00-2:30 p.m. on 3W.
- **Our Facebook Live Veterans Town Hall** will occur at 5:00 p.m. on **April 23**.
- **Veterans Town Hall/Community Meeting** in Sioux City **April 24**, 5:00 p.m. – location still being worked out.



Are you considering owning your own business? Here's an opportunity for you to better plan for success!

**Boots to Business Reboot** is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The course provides an overview of entrepreneurship and applicable business ownership fundamentals. Veterans of all eras, Active Duty Service members (including National Guard and Reserve), and spouses are eligible to participate.

**During Reboot**, participants are introduced to the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to launch a business, including steps for developing business concepts, how to develop a business plan, and information on SBA resources available to help. The program is facilitated by subject matter experts from the SBA and their extensive network of skilled business advisors.

**Participants that complete** an in-person B2B Reboot course can elect to further their study through one of many B2B online courses, offered at no cost to Service members, Veterans and military spouses. If you wish to join the B2B community please go online to visit at <https://sbavets.force.com/login/SelfRegister>. Sign up for one of the online B2B follow-on courses.

**B2BR is scheduled for Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>** from 8AM – 4PM and is held at:

**Hiway Federal Credit Union  
840 Westminster St.; St Paul, MN 55130**

For more information contact **Don Jackson** at **612.370.2335** or [don.jackson@sba.gov](mailto:don.jackson@sba.gov) or to register for the event go to <https://sbavets.force.com>

## HEROES AMONG US

The Military Order of the Purple Heart will be hosting Heroes Among Us with the “Booker Mini Band” at Rochester VFW Post #1215 from 5 to 9 p.m. on **Saturday, April 27**.

**100% of the proceeds go to** the Military Order of the Purple Heart - Lloyd Swenson #7110 and the MN POW/MIA Riders Association.

**Tickets are \$50 in advance**, \$55 at the door. \$350 for a table of eight includes premium seating, table topper, and recognition.

**For tickets, contact** Mark Ugland **507.272.8999**. For auction item donations, contact Craig Ugland **507.259.2608**

If it's keeping up with military news you want go online to [www.militarytimes.com/](http://www.militarytimes.com/)



## MILITARY CUISINE...

Memories, Jeff Gay

Yep, we all remember it and have stories to tell about it.

Some of us loved it and others, well, maybe had more refined palates. In any case, if you were hungry you ate it and you enjoyed the satisfied feeling of a full tummy (maybe not the rolling, gurgling and grumbling feeling and noises it often spawned)



**Dad talked about having K-rations** and I came in only to enjoy the delicacy of C-rats prepared with your handy P-38. A short time later they came out with LRRP's and finally the MRE meals (... Mr. El... oh! Mystery meal!!!!). I do seem to remember the phrase “GI Trots” but I’m unsure as to its origin..... OK, maybe it’s more clinical as “gastro intestinal” rather than “Government Issue” but what fun would that be!



**Oh yes, that pesky little P-38** can opener, you couldn't enjoy a C-Rat meal without it! You affixed it to your Dog Tag (Identification Tag) chain so it's forever with you. It's handy, except when you “HIT THE DIRT” and it folds open and ends up stabbing you in the sternum (one of the few wounds that are not Purple



**Jackson County Veteran Service Office April 2019**

*Heart eligible!* For some dumb reason I still wear mine from basic training.

**A staple of meals that I'm sure we all,** or at least most of us, remember is the venerable old creamed beef on toast or more aptly referred to as S.O.S. **If you don't understand that just ask a more 'seasoned' GI!**

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound Ground beef  
(85% provides more drippings)
- 1/4C All-purpose flour
- 1 Cube beef bouillon
- 3/4tsp Salt
- 1 Pinch ground black pepper
- 2-1/4C Milk (*I use Heavy Whipping Cream*)
- 1/4tsp Worcestershire sauce (*Optional*)

### PREPARATION

**Brown the beef in a large skillet** over medium high heat.

- Stir in flour, bouillon, salt and pepper.
- Saute it all together for about 5 minutes or until flour is absorbed.
- Gradually stir in milk and Worcestershire sauce. Bring all to a simmer, stirring constantly.
- Cook until thickened, about 5 to 10 minutes. Serve hot!

**Lovingly ladle a generous portion** gingerly (*just like the Army cooks used to do*) upon two slices of just toasted toast.



**Serve with salt, pepper** and, well, maybe one of those little TP packets you used to get with your C-Rats or MRE's, just in case... (**NOTE:** *Biscuits or potatoes may be substituted for the toast but that detracts from the true meaning of one of the S's in S.O.S.*) **A generous dollop of butter** on the top will add wonders to the saturated fat content.

**Another great memory of Army chow** mimicked the Dr Seuss Book "**Green Eggs and Ham**". **YES! THEY DO EXIST!** It was funny though, they still tasted like eggs if you didn't look at them.

**A little touch of home away from home.** I had KP in the field and was responsible for preparing the eggs to be cooked. No, there was no "cracking" involved. I opened a large box on which was stamped "Marshall Produce, Marshall, MN" and stared at the yellowish powder which turned a light greenish hue as it was cooked over heat. The ham was still "ham colored".



**It made my mind wander** to the stories my friends who worked there during high school used to tell as they were "making powdered eggs". **I turned greener than the eggs just reminiscing...**

**AHHH, I love those memories!**

**Telephone Care: 866-687-7382 Sioux Falls VA Nurse**  
4 pm-8 am (CT) Monday – Friday, and 24 Hours,  
Weekends and Federal Holidays. (**Primary Care Walk-In Clinic Monday – Friday 8am-4pm**)

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Please place these numbers close by in case you would ever need to call one. We hope that the need never arises but we also understand that it's a real possibility. Better to be prepared and to know where to call for help when help is needed...**

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline**

**1-800-273-8255**

**NATIONAL PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE**

**1-800-522-4700**



**1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1**

**OR TEXT TO "838255"**



minnesotaveteran.org | **1-888-LinkVet**  
(546-5838)

**REMEMBER THIS:**

***"The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten."***

**– Calvin Coolidge**

**HOW COPY? OVER...**

**GOOD COPY! OUT!**

**DON'T FORGET – LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**

[www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices](http://www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices)

or visit online at [www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans](http://www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans)

**See y'all next month!**



*The sole responsibility for content is*

*Jeffrey Gay, Jackson Veteran's Service Officer.*

**Jackson County Veteran Service Office April 2019**