



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 3 Number 4

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

April 2020

This publication is for Veterans, their families and their communities, compiled solely by the Jackson County Veteran 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

CVSO@co.jackson.mn.us

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

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

First Monday monthly we are at the Lakefield library 1PM-3:30PM

Hours may be flexed without notice due to meetings and trainings. Please call for an appointment!

HOW IS YOUR CVSO AFFECTED BY COVID-19!

The Jackson office will remain in operation but with the following nuances and restrictions. Regardless of the following instructions please call 9-1-1 if you have a dire emergency or if you are considering hurting yourself or others call the Crisis Hotline immediately at 1-800-273-8255

We will continue to service Veterans as we can however there will be no face-to-face meetings or interviews, contact may be made via:

i. Telephone

1. Calls to the office phone (507-847-4774) will be transferred to the CVSO as long as there is an operator able to do this
2. Direct line to off-site location is 507-933-4576
3. Calls may be made via cellular to 507-530-8378

ii. Email

1. Email contact is acceptable however we must maintain PII protocol to ensure sensitive information is not transmitted, email to CVSO@co.jackson.mn.us

iii. FAX

1. You can FAX to 507-847-2767

iv. Skype, FaceTime or ZOOM

1. These may be used for face-to-face interaction, more information will be forthcoming to include instructions.
2. "Facetime" via cellular is also available



All home appointments are suspended

Transportation via the Veterans Van is at the discretion of this office, the drivers, screening or what the current protocols are at the destination. FYI, Vet Van transportation may be suspended without notice.

Until further notice CVSO will not be at the Lakefield Library as previously scheduled for first Monday's of each month

Please be patient as the time it takes to get information from other offices may be longer than normal due to emergency procedures and limitations that are being implemented to protect everyone's health during this emergency.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- 1) Follow all posted safety guidelines concerning personal hygiene. Go online to www.cdc.gov as your most reliable source of information.
- 2) Use pick-up and delivery as much as possible. The local grocery store in Jackson does provide delivery services and most restaurants provide curbside pick-up.
- 3) Call ahead – before you go to any office or business call ahead to see if they are open and/or seeing anyone in person and what protocols may be in place for screening, especially clinics and hospitals.

SPECIAL DAYS

April is: Keep America Beautiful Month;
Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- 1 – NO FOOLIN'! It's April Fool's Day
- 5 – Palm Sunday
- 7 – World Health Day
- 8 – Passover Begins
- 10 – Good Friday
- 16 – Freedom of Information Day
- 12 – Easter Sunday
- 15 – Titanic Remembrance Day
- 20 – Patriots Day & Volunteer Recognition Day
- 22 – Earth Day & Administrative Assistant's Day
- 23 – Ramadan Begins
- 24 – Arbor Day – Plant a tree!



Special days in April for the military...

- U.S. Air Force Academy Day - [April 1](#)
- Gold Star Wives Day - [April 5](#)
- Army Day - [April 6](#)
- Appomattox Day - [April 9](#)
- National Former POW Recognition Day - [April 9](#)
- Air Force Reserve Birthday - [April 14](#)
- Army Reserves Birthday - [April 23](#)
- National Military Brats Day - [April 30](#)



Your Jackson County
CVSO will be on the KKOJ
Morning Show the 2nd

Tuesday of every month. Tune in but
don't tune out! The show begins at
8:50AM. 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!



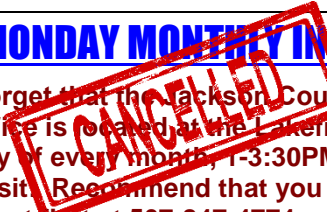
**R.E.D. FRIDAY - WEAR RED
EVERY FRIDAY TO REMEMBER
ALL WHO ARE DEPLOYED!**



**Through the vehicle of radio, Thomas
Lyons of the MN Military Radio Hour
provides information pertinent to
today! He has a guest most every
week and discusses upcoming events
important to you as the Veteran or
military family. The MN Military Radio
Hour is on KKOJ radio at 3PM Sundays.**

FIRST MONDAY MONTHLY IN LAKEFIELD

Don't forget that the Jackson County Veteran
Service Office is located at the Lakefield Library the
first Monday of every month, 1-3:30PM. C'mon down
and visit! Recommend that you call for an
appointment first at 507-847-4774 or just walk in...



CONSIDER TELEHEALTH!

Now, more than ever, it is
important for all of us to consider
telehealth appointments for all appoints not requiring a
face-to-face with your doctor.

Many things can be accomplished via telehealth to
include routine check-ups and consults, psychological
consults, training classes, etc.

When you get an appointment ask your **PCM** if this can
be done via telehealth. If it can then it may be done at
home on your computer, tablet or smart phone. Saves
time and travel costs...

COMMUNITY CARE & COVID-19

In reading an article in the Military Times and another on
Military.com it appears that some Community Care
appoints may be cut due to the Covid-19 crisis. However,
in a statement by VA Secretary Wilkie it is determined that
the secretary is pushing back on news reports that
the existing Community Care appointments are being
curtailed, but acknowledged that many new requests
for meetings with outside physicians could be
delayed or denied because of health and safety
concerns in local communities.

For more on this you can go online to
[www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-
congress/2020/03/26/va-secretary-pledges-public-
coronavirus-response-wont-compromise-focus-on-
veterans/](http://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/03/26/va-secretary-pledges-public-coronavirus-response-wont-compromise-focus-on-veterans/) For confirmation and additional
information please call your VA clinic.

APRIL – MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

All children have a lot on their “plates” with family,
school, sports, socializing and even more when they
reach the “hormonic” age of noticing boys or girls! Their
lives get full and complicated. It's tough to be a kid
anymore!

If a child has a parent, other family member or close
family friend in the military, regardless of them being
Active Duty, Guard or Reserve, their “plate” piles higher
with additional layers to that onion of life.

With this comes anxiety and the worry of upcoming
deployments, the feeling of abandonment or loss when
there are deployments and the rapt anticipation and
euphoria of reunion following the return from war. We, as friends
and neighbors, need to help
parents and/or care takers deal
with this.



Each April we celebrate the
“Month of the Military Child”!

[www.dodea.edu/dodeaCelebrates/Military-Child-
Month.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/dodeaCelebrates/Military-Child-Month.cfm)

COVID-19 - TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD

Jeffrey L. Gay, CVSO

Children are intuitive and can pick up queue's from not only speech but also body language, attitude and anxious fear that you work hard to hide. Kids, like adults, harbor all the same senses as you do.



The "New Normal" we are now facing with the Covid-19 threat can be disconcerting for all of us but (*good & honest*) information and understanding can dispel some of the anxiety we all share.

First of all, talk to your kids honestly but providing just enough information about what's happening so as not to stir additional anxiety. Be honest but remember that providing too much information, especially about death and what some people impart to make it more exciting or newsworthy, can cause their imaginations to flare with scary visions!

Most important, limit their exposure to the news on TV and radio. Things taken out of context can morph into something quite different than what's really happening...

There are four basic questions that kids ask. They are:

- **What is the Coronavirus?**
- **How do you catch it?**
- **Why are people wearing masks?**
 - *Should I wear a mask?*
- **Will I die from the Coronavirus?**

These are essentially the same questions all of us are asking. We want answers and so do they, don't ignore them!

Remember, they are our future. You're not protecting them by shielding them or being silent, tell them the truth in terms that are non-threatening and that they can easily understand. They can better deal with it if they know what "IT" is...

- **Be calm...** Don't let hysteria or anxious alarm crowd your life and into your conversation. Continue your daily routines (modified) to let them know that there is still a normality to life around them. The calmer you are the calmer they will be.
- **Limit News Exposure...** Again, limit their time in front of the TV or radio when news is being played and monitor what they are watching. News media tries to make all things exciting to listen to boosting their ratings.
- **Always be "lookin' for the good stuff"!** Kids are continually looking for reassurance, especially from the adults in their lives. Do your best to give it to them. Let them know it's OK to be scared but doing what they are told (hand

washing, covering their cough, etc.) will help to keep the "bug" away. Take time to become aware of things around you that are happening which are fun or interesting for the kids. Keep them engaged and busy...

The majority of the preceding information I gleaned from the Harvard School of Medicine online.

HELLO!

I am a VIRUS, cousins with the Flu and the Common Cold



My name is Coronavirus

HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Novel Coronavirus is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people. Symptoms include coughing, sneezing, runny nose, fever and shortness of breath. To help prevent the spread of the virus and protect yourself, follow Dr. Rita's recommendations!



Wash your hands often with soap and water



Avoid close contact with people who are sick



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve



Avoid touching your face



Stay home when you are sick and get lots of rest



Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of fluids

OC Public Libraries

ohealth CARE AGENCY

For more information, please visit ohealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus

WHAT'S "THE GOOD STUFF"?

There's a seminar I was at once based on a book titled "Looking for the Good Stuff". It outlined an altruistic plan to find good regardless of the situation. It's a mantra that I have used for decades, I always look to find that nugget of hope or goodness in all situations. Below is a quote from the book.



"Find a bright spot and clone it. That's the first step to fixing anything from addiction to corporate malaise to malnutrition. A problem may look hopelessly complex. But there's a game plan that can yield movement on even the toughest issues. And it starts with locating a bright spot... a ray of hope."

To do this we must begin from a positive core, be creative in how we see things, view all aspects from every angle and then form a plan to find a better outcome.

It's really not that hard, you just have to open your mind and use all of your senses, think outside of your comfort zone or "the box".

The next step is to share that optimism with others, imbue others with the positiveness of what you find regardless of how large or how small it is.

Life is all about Positive Mental Attitude (PMA), with out it life is so much harder and less enjoyable.

Let's get looking for the good stuff!!!!!!

BE AWARE! AND BE WARY...

During times like this the scammers are out in droves. Don't become a statistic, become wary. If you receive an offer too good to be true it probably is.

If they ask for private information via phone, door solicitor, postal mail or email remember that no bank or government organization affiliation will ever do this.



Be firm in dealing with them, demand identification and take the time to check the source. You can also go on-line and search for ongoing scams or contact your

local authorities if you suspect you are being targeted.

Here are a couple of good websites to learn more:

www.usa.gov/stop-scams-frauds

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0208-phone-scams

Once this crisis is over don't let your guard down. Whether or not there is a crisis like the one we're now experiencing the scammers are always there. They write elegant prose and are great "fast talkers" complete with an air of empathy and compassion besides instilling excitement!

They prey heavily on the elderly. Regardless of your age you too are a target so be aware! If you believe you are being scammed please note the phone number, URL or email address and report it to your local authorities.

"Tough times don't last. Tough people do."
~ Robert H. Schuller

PURPLE HEART FLAG ADPTION

There has been a bill introduced by Rep. Brian Higgins (D-New York) to amend the US Code to allow for the designation of a flag modeled after the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) indicia. This would also direct that it be flown on federal buildings and memorials on designated national holidays.

The flag should fly on holidays including Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day, according to the bill's language.

In a statement, Rep. Higgins stated, "Raising the Purple Heart Flag would provide a visual reminder of the wounds our warriors endured and the soldiers who have laid down their lives to uphold the liberties this nation was founded on and continues to hold dear."



Membership in the Military Order of the Purple Heart is restricted to those who have received the Purple Heart medal.

The Purple Heart is the oldest U.S. combat decoration still awarded. The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, NY places the number of Purple Hearts awarded at more than 1.5 million.

ARE YOU CHEMICALLY DEPENDENT?

Jeffrey L. Gay

We all share a common dependency for the chemical H₂O, without it we couldn't survive. (Psssst... That's water...) However, there are other chemicals that are used for more nefarious reasons that we CAN live without and live longer too!

Over the past year I have fielded several calls from family and friends of Veterans for whom they are concerned of killing themselves by the frequency, and the amount, of chemicals they use.

We have beer, wine & hard liquor; street drugs, designer drugs & prescription drugs; pills, powder, leafy and injectable liquid... OH! And let's not forget the stuff my grand-daddy used to concoct in the old wood shed before it mysteriously exploded and burned down.

There are myriad reasons why any of us may "imbibe spirituous libation" or otherwise use the many various other forms of substances which have mind altering properties.

Fun, excitement, pain relief, release and many more. We live in a world where chemicals are readily available, some legal and other illicit. With that said, it's up to us as to whether or not we use any of it regardless of the health warnings we repeatedly hear.

Some can hide its use well, or at least they think they can, and go about every day in a state of euphoric altered reality. Many of these people have done it for so long we may not see it. However, their productivity and social interactions would surely be more productive and genuine if they were not.

Chemical use affects you, your family and those around you, it affects your job, your health and your ability to make cognizant decisions. It causes depression, fatigue, altered behavior, resentful feelings, the urge to fight, guilt, financial hardship, and more.



There is help available!

IF YOU ARE FAMILY. If all else fails you can turn to intervention to help the individual realize they have a problem that is a burden upon everyone involved. Intervention can have many outcomes.

- He/she will quit voluntarily and attend AA/NA
- He/she will agree to treatment and then AA/NA

- He/she will get angry and walk away Requesting a court order may be an option to get the person into treatment.

IF YOU ARE AN EMPLOYER. You have options too...

- Counsel them as to the effects it's having on their job
- Suspend them long enough to allow them to seek help and treatment. If available contact your **EAP**.
- Terminate their employment per your chemical use policy.

IF YOU ARE SUFFERING FROM ADDICTION.

- Admit to yourself that you have a problem
- Ask for help and include your family.
- Voluntarily seek treatment
- Attend AA/NA meetings; participate and get a sponsor.

REMEMBER!

If you are going to confront the person be sure you are committed to it and ready to remain a part of the situation for support and/or to accept any ramifications.

Confronting the person if you care is the right thing to do. Have your "ducks in a row" so the facts are straight and the options are clear. Do research and contact the treatment facilities first to be sure there are vacancies and learn their protocols are.



Having someone else there is a good idea too, you don't know how the individual will react. In some situations it may be prudent to inform law enforcement ahead of time in case they need to respond.

Be sincere and non-threatening, stay calm, this is not the time for anger! Be open to answering questions. It may take some time so be sure to clear your schedule. It will be intense and filled with many emotions. Don't back down. Once you start you need to go the distance!

If it doesn't work the first time do not get discouraged, it rarely does. If the person does accept help be ready to provide immediate transportation to a treatment center or detox.

If you decide to try it again remember that it never gets any easier.

SMALL BUSINESS HELP IS AVAILABLE!

Carranza Implements Automatic Deferment on Existing SBA Disaster Loans Through End of 2020



Release Number: 20-27 Monday, March 23, 2020
Contact: Press_Office@sba.gov, (202) 205-7036

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Jovita Carranza announced changes to help borrowers still paying back SBA loans from previous disasters. By

making this change, deferments through December 31, 2020, will be automatic. Now, borrowers of home and business disaster loans do not have to contact SBA to request deferment.



U.S. Small Business Administration

"The SBA is looking at every option and taking every action to cut red tape to make it easier for small businesses to stay in business. Automatically deferring existing SBA disaster loans through the end of the year will help borrowers during this unprecedented time," said Administrator Carranza. "Today's announcement adds a list of growing actions the SBA is taking to support small businesses. These actions include making it easier for states and territories to request a declaration so small businesses statewide can now apply for economic injury disaster loans, and changing the terms of new economic injury loans to allow for one-year deferments. We are working around the clock to find ways to assist small businesses and today's action is one step in this process."

Visit [HTTPS://SBA.gov/Coronavirus](https://sba.gov/coronavirus) online for more information on SBA's assistance to small businesses.

PTSD COACH APP

Are you looking for ways to help manage **PTSD** symptoms? The PTSD Coach **app** may be able to help.

The PTSD Coach app (<https://mobile.va.gov/app/ptsd-coach>) is a digital resource provided by the National Center for PTSD aimed at helping veterans learn more about and manage their symptoms of PTSD from anywhere. Through the PTSD Coach app you are able to use the built-in coping tools when you feel upset or stressed as well as create your own support network. You can also track your progress to see if symptoms are improving over time.

Recently, the app has been upgraded to include new features allowing you to have a customized and personal experience. You're now able to make your own music playlists and upload your own photos. Download the app to get started today.

This app is also available in Spanish. You can personalize the app through your profile and choose your preferred language.

Jus' a little hoomer.....

The Pentagon once did a study on why so many American Servicemen marry women in the countries where they're stationed.

Contrary to popular belief, loneliness had nothing to do with it. Once the men rotated back to the US, all their in-laws were thousands of miles away.

Your Voice Counts!

Help make sure Veterans in Minnesota are counted in the 2020 Census

United States®
**Census
2020**

Each year, Minnesota communities receive 15 billion dollars from the federal government on the basis of the Census count.

That's **\$15,459,175,947!**

- \$2,796 per Minnesotan per year
- \$27,960 per Minnesotan per decade

Programs whose funding is affected by the Census:

- *Veterans Housing Rehabilitation and Modification Program* - \$2,850,000
- *Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program* - \$116,436,000
- *Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program* - \$45,000,000
- *Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program* - \$300,000,000

An accurate and complete 2020 Census count is vital to our community and state. Here are some of the most important things to know.

Who gets counted?

Everyone! The census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution and counts all people who reside in the United States, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

When is the Census?

Starting in March 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will mail letters to every household in the United States inviting all to respond to the Census survey. Every household should receive a letter requesting that they complete a census survey online, by mail, or phone by **Census Day on April 1, 2020.**

Why do we have a census?

The data collected from the Census is used to make sure everyone is equally represented in our political system, and that government resources are allocated fairly. The Census data determines how many congressional seats a state receives; how much federal funding will be allocated to local communities for public services and infrastructure needs; and provides a picture of the changing demographics of the country.

You can take the census online too!

It takes but a couple minutes to complete your census online on your computer or tablet and probably on your Smart Phone too. Just enter www.census.gov into your browser's search bar, hit "Enter" and scroll down to the picture titled "**WAYS TO RESPOND**". you're on your way to having complied to the US census!

"Hard times don't create heroes. It is during the hard times when the 'hero' within us is revealed."
~ Bob Riley

PRESS RELEASE

**MARK
YOUR
CALENDARS!!!!**

Martin County, MN – The Martin County CVSO Doug Landsteiner sent me a press release for an event that will take place in Fairmont on **August 1, 2020.**



Martin Counties Veterans Memorial Site will permanently display an actual Bell Cobra-Fixed Wing Attack Helicopter AH-1-66F-05327. Records reflect that this particular aircraft is internationally famous for serving in both Vietnam and Laos from 1968-1971.

This aircraft was hit on at least twelve occasions by enemy fire. The armored plating saved the cockpit crew from serious injury. It was able to be repaired to fly again. More will come in later issues outlining this aircraft's history.



It is now in Fairmont being restored returning it to the likeness of 1971. Restoration has been ongoing since the Fall or 2019 and anybody is welcome to stop by to see the progress.

For more information you can call or email Mr. Steve Chase, dedication Chair. 612.799.3367 or sdchase234@q.com.

SOLDIERS/FAMILIES AFFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS

WWW.ARMY.MIL

WASHINGTON -- The Army has rolled out new allowances for Soldiers and families facing official travel delays or in quarantine amid the COVID-19 virus outbreak.

A hardship duty pay for restriction of movement, or **HDP-ROM**, now provides Soldiers who are not currently in a travel status \$100 per day -- not to exceed \$1,500 -- to defray the cost of additional lodging if a commander restricts them to a self-monitoring period.

HDP-ROM may also be available to other Soldiers who have been ordered to stay isolated, such as individuals returning from a deployment or temporary duty.

The hardship duty pay is a taxable, lump sum payment for each day in self-monitoring or isolation.

New isolation allowances are being given to Soldiers and families ordered to stay isolated after completing a permanent change-of-station move.

The allowance is based on local per diem rates and starts after the Soldier reports to a new duty station and before

eligible for temporary lodging allowance or temporary lodging expense. The Soldier must also incur a cost and not already be provided lodging or meals to earn the allowance.

Once their new command tells them they can start to in-process, Soldiers will then be eligible for their regular **PCS** allowances.

Soldiers and families ordered to self-isolate or quarantine while proceeding to their next duty station will be placed on temporary duty and authorized per diem if lodging or meals are not provided.

In addition, Soldiers currently on **TDY** status may be eligible to extend their orders to cover costs incurred during their self-monitoring period.

For more reading on this go online to https://www.army.mil/article/233808/new_allowances_for_soldiers_families_affected_by_covid_19

UNIFORM OF THE "DAY"?

A Navy Admiral was being court-martialed for an incident where he was found to be playfully chasing his girlfriend through the hallways of the hotel in which they were both staying. Neither of them were wearing anything.

One of the charges was that of "being out of uniform".

The Admiral's lawyer argued that the officer was not out of uniform, as the regulations read, "A Naval officer must be at all times appropriately attired for the activity in which he is engaged."

The Admiral was acquitted, no charges!

A QUICK SHOUT OUT ON STRESS!

CVSO Jeffrey L. Gay

STRESS is an ugly thing... Whether you know it or not these past few weeks have been stressful and it doesn't seem to look any different in the weeks to come. This is a real concern with so many working from home or being laid off and the children homeschooling. All occupying essentially the same space...



How do you handle stress? Its so easy to do but I **DO NOT RECOMMEND** turning to a "brown bottle" means of treating it. You can also shout at the top of your lungs but that's only a very temporary relief.

Your VA has a great workbook that will help you deal with stress in a positive manner, just go to: www.prevention.va.gov/MPT/2013/docs/ManageStressWorkbook_Dec2013.pdf

Other more natural methods include:

- ❖ *Talking/confiding in a family member or confidant*
- ❖ *Exercise or taking a long walk, especially in an area where nature is prevalent without distractions of roadways, etc.*

- ❖ *Music (No, not the headbanging type!)*
- ❖ *Reading a book or magazine*
- ❖ *Playtime with your children or other adults*
- ❖ *Meditation is great! There are books and sites on-line to give you hints, tips and instruction.*
- ❖ *It's springtime! Start gardening and doing outdoor yardwork/repair*
- ❖ *A nap never hurts.....*
- ❖ *"Spring hand gripper" or "stress ball"*
- ❖ **Pet Intervention!** *Pets display unconditional love and are very effective at making you feel special and loved. Caring for them also provides you a respite from your usual routine and a reason to stop and play! If you do not have a pet and would like to get one, shelter adoptions are up by 33%! Contact your local shelter...*

I'm sure there are other methods but these are just a few off the top of my head.



Stress takes a toll on a person causing health problems and even death. If you don't take the time to recognize it and deal with it you can suffer mentally and physically as can those around you.

Stress can cause angst and that alone can make a person do things out of character to include mental and physical abuse or fighting/arguing with others you normally wouldn't. It can end up in injury to others or self-inflicted, it can also cause incarceration or restraining orders if left untreated! **Worst case scenario? Suicide!**

Crisis or Suicide Hotline! 800-273-8255

If domestic abuse or "untamed" anger is already in a family stress can exacerbate it and take it to a whole other level. Now is the time to recognize it and nip it in the bud!



There are many aspects to abuse to include violence. Some of the more common are economic abuse, shaming, blaming, isolation, emotional, intimidation and more. For more information go online to www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/ This site also provides a hotline number to get help!

800-799-3224

All calls are confidential!



THANK GOODNESS FOR FACTORY WARRANTIES!

A paratrooper was receiving orders for his first jump. His sergeant said: "When you jump out of the plane, wait ten seconds, then pull the main parachute cord. If there's trouble with the main 'chute, pull the emergency 'chute's cord. When you land there will be a truck there to drive you back to the base."

Off the trooper went and boarded the plane. Once he had jumped he pulled the cord for the main 'chute: It didn't open. He then pulled the emergency 'chute: It failed too.

"Oh great!" the paratrooper thought, "I bet there's no truck down there either."

WORDS & STUFF GLOSSARY

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Syndrom
PCM	Primary Care Manager (Doctor)
App	Application, primarily for SmartPhone
"imbibe spirituous libation"	To drink of the fermented grape or grain in a liquid state, alcohol
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
TDY	Temporary Duty
HDP-ROM	Hardship Duty Pay for Restriction of Movement

FROM THE FINAL THREE PAGES:

VBA	Veterans Benefits Administration
Telework	Anything with the prefix of "tele" dictates that it is done off-site via electronic means (<i>i.e. phone, Internet, video, etc.</i>)
Tele-benefits	
Tele-counseling	
Tele-C&Pexam	
Tele-Health	
C&Pexam	Comp & Pension Examination
TAP	Transition Assistance Program helping Vets get jobs.
CBOC	Community Based Outpatient Clinic

COMMENTARY

Jeffrey L. Gay

Many of us have time on our hands now to do the things we may have forgotten about, take that time to close your eyes and smell the air, listen to the sounds, feel the breeze as it blows and tussles your hair.

This is life in the raw, no electronics, just us and nature. Gaze through your windows and see the birds and squirrels at play, the spring buds opening and the brown grass turning green.

This is your time. This is our time. Enjoy it alone and with those you care about. Remember it fondly when this crisis is over and continue to take the time for what's really important, you and yours.

What's it cost? A little love... Make your life's equity that of a lotta love and many tomorrows to come leaving a legacy to be proud of.

It really is a wonderful world... Listen to Louis "The Satchmo" Armstrong's "It's A Wonderful World" online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3yCcXgbKrE or Israel "Izzy" Kawakawiwo'ole's version of "Over the Rainbow" at www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKgKE7bqD3w

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



Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**
OR TEXT TO "838255"



Veterans Linkage Line
your link to experts
minnesotaveteran.org | **1-888-LinkVet**
(546-5838)

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
HOTLINE 
1-800-799-7233

DON'T FORGET – LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices

Visit us online www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans

COMMO CHECK!!!!!!
HOW COPY? OVER...
GOOD COPY! OUT!



GOIN' ON-LINE

These are web addresses which can help you, entertain you and keep you abreast of news, views and changes in benefits. Keep an eye out for additions to the list as we move forward!



NEWS & VIEWS

Marine Times	www.marinecorpstimes.com
Air Force Times	www.airforcetimes.com
Military Times	www.militarytimes.com
Military.COM	www.military.com
SOFREP News	https://sofrep.com/news/

BENEFITS & OTHER INTEREST

U.S. Veterans Affairs	www.va.gov
MN Dept. of Vet Affairs	https://mn.gov/mdva/
My Health-e Vet	www.myhealth.va.gov

SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

American Legion	www.legion.org
MN American Legion	www.mnlegion.org
Veterans of Foreign Wars	www.VFW.org
Disabled American Vets	www.DAV.org
AMVETS	http://amvetsnsf.org
Vietnam Vets of America	https://vva.org/
Military Order of Purple heart	https://moph.org

MILITARY SERVICE BRANCHES

US Army	www.goarmy.com
US Marine Corps	www.marines.mil
US Navy	www.navy.mil
US Air Force	www.airforce.com
US Coast Guard	www.uscg.mil
National Guard (Army/Air)	www.nationalguard.com

OF INTEREST TO MILITARY RETIREES

TRICARE Health	www.tricare.com *
DFAS MyPay (Finance)	https://mypay.dfas.mil *
Military Officers Assn.	www.moaa.org
DoD Lodging Site	www.dodlodging.net *
America's Warrior Part.	americaswarriorpartnership.org
Dental & Vision – FEDVIP	www.benefeds.com

OTHER LINKS PROVIDING INFO AND ASSISTANCE

Nat'l Archives (Records)	https://archives.gov/veterans
MACV (Financial/Legal)	www.mac-v.org
Minnesota LinkVet	https://minnesotaveteran.org
Senior Linkage Line	www.seniorlinkageline.com
Wounded Warrior Proj.	www.woundedwarriorproject.org
"Make the Connection"	www.MakeTheConnection.net
MN Military & Vet Exch.	www.mnme.us
Minnesota Help!	https://mnhelp.info/
Ctr for Disease Control	www.cdc.gov

VETERANS MALL, LODGING & VACATIONS

Armed Forces Exchange	www.aafes.gov *
Armed Forces Lodging	www.dodlodging.net/ *
AF Vacation Club	www.afvclub.com

"WHO YA GONNA CALL?!"

From time to time you need to call for help. Besides your local CVSO the numbers below may be helpful for you to call direct!



Resources for SW/WC MN Area Veterans

VAMC, Sioux Falls, SD	605.336.3230
(Toll Free)	(800.316.8387)
<i>(Press "0" or your party's extension to interrupt message)</i>	
A Nurse & Telephone Care	866.687.7382
Telephone Triage	x7140
Patient Advocate	x6688
Pharmacy Refills	855.560.1723
VA Billing Questions	866-347-2352
CBOC, Spirit Lake, IA	712.336.6400
CBOC, St James, MN	507.375.9670
MN Vet's Home, Luverne, MN	507.283.6200
Toll Free	877.588.8387
Vet Center, Sioux Falls, SD	605.330.4552
MACV, Mankato Office	507.345.8258
SW Ctr for Independent Living	507.532.2221
MDVA SW MN Higher Education Coordinator	507.537.7213
MDVA Tribal VSO, SW MN	507.637.1534
MDVA Veterans Linkage Line	888.546.5838
Senior Linkage Line	800.333.2433
VA Crisis Line/Suicide Line	1.800.273.TALK
	press 1 (273.8255)
Defense Finance & Acc't. Svc	888.332.7411
TRICARE West Region	844.866.9378

MN Veterans Service Organizations' Dept. HQ's

The American Legion	866.259.9163
Veterans of Foreign Wars	651.291.1757
Disabled American Veterans	651.291.1212
Military Order Purple Heart	651.227.4456
Vietnam Veterans of America	651.224.6345

IDENTIFICATION CARDS/DEERS UPDATES

(Call for appointment and bring proper paperwork)

NG Armory, Mankato, MN	507.389.6219
100 Martin Luther King Drive	Mon-Wed-Fri
114 th FW, Sioux Falls, SD	605.988.5845
1201 W. Algonquin St.	
196 th MEB, Sioux Falls, SD	605.357.2900 or 2985
800 W. National Guard Drive	
NG Armory, Montevideo, MN	320.269.9284 or 5180
711 S. 17 th St.	Mon-Fri / 9am-3pm

LOCAL CVSO IS: _____

FINDING A LOCAL VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER

MN Ass'n of Vet Service Officers	www.macvso.org
Nat'l Ass'n of Vet Service Officers	www.nacvso.org

Coronavirus (COVID 19) - Sioux Falls VA Health Care System Rules

Update 17 March 2020

Please help us limit the spread of COVID-19, the flu, and other illnesses by following these instructions. We thank you for your cooperation and support.

In order for the Sioux Falls VA to provide continuity of care to our Veterans, we are asking for your assistance. If you are tested for the Coronavirus (Covid-19) at a community healthcare facility or are contacted by the South Dakota CDC, please communicate to them that you receive care through the VA Healthcare System.

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System operations are adapting due to the emergence of the COVID-19 virus in our community to maintain a healthy environment for our Veterans, family members, and staff.

In an effort to confront emerging challenges related to COVID-19 transmission in our community, we are initiating emergency measures to prevent avoidable transmission of illness here within our medical center.

Visitor restrictions are in effect at ALL the Sioux Falls VA HCS facilities, this is inclusive of all CBOC's as well as the Main Hospital in Sioux Falls.

The following visitation safeguards are currently in place:

- *Outpatients should come to VA appointments alone, if possible. If assistance is needed for your visit, limit your guest to one adult family caregiver who is not sick.*
- *Inpatients are limited to one visitor per day.*
- *Visitors are not allowed to visit the Community Living Centers (CLC).*
- *Entrance into the Sioux Falls VA and Community Based Outpatient Clinics will be routed through the front door and the Emergency Department after hours; staff are screening people for symptoms of fever, cough, or shortness of breath before entry.*

Calling Inpatients at the Sioux Falls VA

- *Visitors/guests can call to speak to inpatients by calling the operator at 605-336-3230 dial 0 and ask for the inpatient/Veteran by name to be transferred.*
- *All patients and visitors are reminded to wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after visitation / appointment.*

Allow extra time

We encourage all patients to allow for extra time to get to appointments with the required screening. We appreciate all support and understanding as we plan, prepare and respond to this emerging public health concern.

We will initiate screenings for all who enter our medical center buildings and clinics. The screenings will help ensure we are protecting our population of hospitalized Veterans, the teams that care for them, and families of all involved. We fully recognize this will cause some inconveniences, but the safety of those we care for must be the priority.

Here are a few things you can do to limit the impact of the inconvenience and help protect our hospitalized Veterans:

- *Ask your health care team if any of your future appointments can be conducted using our convenient "telehealth" appointments. Telehealth appointments allow you access to your care provider from the comfort and convenience of a location you chose, using your smart phone or tablet.*
- *When you come to our campus, allow extra time for screenings and navigating to your appointments.*
- *Wash your hands with soap and water multiple times a day or use Alcohol-based Hand cleaners.*
- *Try to not touch your eyes, nose or mouth as germs spread easily with contact.*
- *Get your flu shot.*

Any changes will be announced as soon as we have information to share.



Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) COVID-19 Updates

Updated March 25, 2020

VBA is committed to ensuring the health and safety of employees and visitors during the unique circumstances of the global COVID-19 impact, while also maintaining operations. VBA benefits and services provided to Veterans, families, and survivors will continue to be delivered for the duration of the COVID-19 impacts. Effects of COVID-19 vary by geographical location. Regional Offices (RO) are following the guidelines set forth by the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management, and other federal guidance, and may utilize telework flexibilities as a result. ROs are authorized to maximize telework. Additionally, RO Directors are working closely with their state and local government to ensure we continue to provide Veteran benefits and services, in addition to maintaining workforce readiness.

VBA PERFORMANCE

Monthly benefit payments will continue uninterrupted. VBA continues to exceed output targets as we move toward achieving our **#BestYearEver**. Last week, Veterans filing claims for Education benefits continued to receive decisions on original claims in 15 days and on supplemental claims in under seven days, well below target levels of 28 days for original claims and 14 days for supplemental claims. Nearly 100 percent of Veterans seeking a loan guaranty certificate of eligibility received it within the goal of 5 days, and approximately 90 percent were delivered within one day. Call Centers are exceeding targets for service delivery — last week, Veterans needing to discuss their claims or benefits with a call center agent waited an average of one minute to speak to an agent, with 88 percent of callers reaching an agent within our target of two minutes. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors continue to reach newly eligible Veterans and grow program participation, exceeding growth rate targets.

RO OPERATIONS

VBA is maintaining all phases of full business operations as we are maximizing **telework**. All ROs were closed to the public on March 19, 2020. ROs may close due to stay-at-home guidance issued by governors or mayor; however, full business operations remain.

How We Work with Veterans

VBA is maximizing its use of alternatives to in-person appointments including the use of phone and video capabilities. Veterans can continue to get information about benefits or file a claim for benefits by visiting our website at www.va.gov. Veterans with claims specific or other questions may request information via Inquiry Routing & Information System (IRIS) at <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/> or telephone at **1-800-827-1000**.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)

ROs will provide alternative methods to conduct the orientation to Veterans and claimants. **Tele-counseling** is being provided as the recommended method for conducting initial evaluations, case management appointments to include job placement assistance, and Chapter 36 counseling.

Fiduciary Field Examinations

Field examiners are conducting interviews over the phone or over video conferencing with face-to-face interviews conducted in emergent situations only.

Disability Examinations

There are instances when claimants are asking to cancel or postpone scheduling their examination appointments because of social distancing practices. VA will not deny a claim solely for a failure to report for an exam at this time realizing it could elongate the time to process a claim. Claims processors are also identifying claims where the record contains sufficient medical evidence necessary to render a decision or use the Acceptable Clinical Evidence (ACE) process.

As of March 22, VBA contract vendors have reported a cumulative total of 12,580 unique Veterans whose contract examinations have been impacted by the pandemic (*1,416 overseas and 11,164 domestic*).

Medical Disability Examination contract vendors have received initial and very recent refresher training on the Acceptable Clinical Evidence (ACE) process. The ACE process involves C&P clinicians completing Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQs) examinations using the medical evidence currently in existence in a Veteran's claims file or medical records, supplemented by a telephone interview with the Veteran if necessary, instead of requiring some Veterans to be examined in-person.

VBA has also completed training with the MDE contract vendors so they may identify which DBQs may be appropriately completed through a **tele-C&P-exam**.

VBA has discontinued the use of public facing Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs). Originally, public facing DBQs were designed to assist Veterans living overseas to obtain medical evidence in support of their benefit claims where limited options were available. Today, VA works with contracted providers in more than 30 foreign countries to conduct disability medical examinations.

We encourage all Veterans, survivors, and dependents to work with an accredited organization for assistance in completing claims for VA benefits. A list of accredited organizations can be found on the Office of General Counsel site at this link: Search the VA Office of the General Counsel's list.

Military Service Coordinators

Military Service Coordinators (MSCs) will perform work through telephone interviews to minimize face-to-face exposure. All eight Overseas MSCs were brought back to the states and are symptom-free but are in self-quarantine. Overseas MSC are conducting operations virtually in coordination and collaboration with the Department of Defense.

Education Benefits

VBA will continue to pay benefits regardless of the fact that the program has changed from resident training to online training. Students will continue to receive the same monthly housing allowance payments that they received for resident training until December 21, 2020, or until the school resumes normal operations of resident training. There are no changes to current policy if a student goes from full-time to part-time; housing allowance will be reduced accordingly.

Loan Guaranty Benefits

VBA will continue to process new Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant requests and active grant projects as normal, except replacing face-to-face engagements with virtual processes. When virtual processes are not possible, VBA will work with available resources to keep the grant moving forward with minimal disruption.

Outreach

ROs are conducting outreach virtually when possible including the use of radio shows and video teleconferencing. If a RO is capable of conducting **tele-benefits**, it will be annotated on the VA facility's website.

VA Transition Assistance Program (VA TAP)

Effective March 30, 2020, VA will no longer provide any in-person delivery of **TAP** events or on-site activities.

All VA Benefits and Services courses will be available through Joint Knowledge Online (<https://JKO.jten.mil>). In addition to the VA Benefits and Services course, VA Military Life Cycle (MLC) modules are also available on the JKO platform. Requests for one-on-one Servicemember support should be routed through TAP Managers, who can contact their VA TAP Regional Transition Liaison.

A Reminder to Minnesota Veterans

If you have these symptoms:



The VA Health Care System asks that you call FIRST if feeling ill:

- **Minneapolis: 612-467-1100**
- **Fargo: 701-239-3700 extension 2319**
- **St. Cloud: 320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739**
- **Sioux Falls: 605-336-3230 or 605-336-5001**

The medical staff will advise you on next steps based on your symptoms. In a medical emergency, call 911.

Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services along with Emergency Management in Jackson and Cottonwood Counties are coordinating their efforts to meet the essential needs of our communities. To request assistance getting food, medication, or other needs, Please call the Essential Services Hotline at 507-847-6839