



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 8

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

August 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

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)

www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans
You can find us on Facebook too

HOMEGROWN BY HEROES

Veterans have opportunity to grow with USDA

Few pairings more closely align than Veterans and farming. The skill sets developed in military service match many of the characteristics of a successful agricultural professional. Whether it's a sense of duty, responsibility and accountability for completing the mission, or being organized and disciplined, Veterans typically transition naturally into farming, ranching, and other agricultural opportunities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture knows what Veterans bring to the table: a strict adherence to rules and schedules, the ability to problem solve quickly and creatively, and strong work ethic. In return, USDA is committed to assisting Veterans across the country to keep America's food supply safe and secure.

In 2018, USDA's Farm Service Agency provided \$64.5 million in direct and guaranteed farm operating loans to Veterans—and Veterans have preference. Veteran farmers and ranchers receive certain preferences under most USDA farm credit and farmland conservation programs. They are eligible for increased cost share assistance, additional financial incentives, and funding preferences for engaging in conservation efforts.

For Veterans living in rural America, USDA has additional resources to strengthen and empower skilled Veteran leaders to support the communities they know and love.

"Nearly one quarter of Veterans, approximately 5 million, live in rural areas," said Bill Ashton, USDA Military Veteran Agricultural Liaison. "They [Veterans] can be a positive force for our communities. USDA is committed to making our programs accessible to help Veterans start or grow a career and maximize the potential talent of this population."

USDA's Rural Development has more than 40 loan, grant, and technical assistance programs including support to:

- Purchase and develop land and facilities
- Purchase equipment and supplies
- Refinance for job expansion
- Finance for energy efficiency improvements

Veterans in urban areas also have resources available. Whether its backyard or rooftop farming or cutting-edge technologies in intensive indoor hydroponic or aquaculture farms, USDA can help urban



Army Veteran Jody Schnurrenberger, Hock-Newberry Farm operations owner and U.S. Coast Guard Veteran Erica Govednik, and U.S. Army Veterans Christine and David Hale, Jr. at Hock-Dewberry Farm, an organically-managed farm in Marshall, Virginia.

SPECIAL DAYS

August is: FAMILY FUN MONTH!

- “Dog Days of Summer” (Jul 3rd thru Aug 11th)
4 – Coast Guard Birthday (a.k.a. US Coast Guard Day)
5 – Jackson VSO at Lakefield Library 1-3:30PM
7 – Military Purple Heart Day
7 – National Lighthouse Day
8 – “VJ” Day (1945) Victory over Japan - WWII
20 – World Mosquito Day
21 – Senior Citizens Day
27 – World Forgiveness Day
29 – Marine Forces Reserve Birthday



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!



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 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...

HOMEGROWN BY HEROES

Continued from Page 1...

Veterans explore opportunities in agriculture. USDA's Urban Agriculture Toolkit is a great place to start.

USDA ensures that Veterans looking to return home or start a new career on a farm or in a rural community have the tools and opportunities needed for success. Resources are available in every aspect of the agricultural industry including Entrepreneurship, Education and Employment.

USDA's Veteran website serves as a one-stop navigator for Veterans looking to learn more and support the critical mission of preparedness and defense of America's food and agriculture sectors.

This article is a reprint of a press release. For more information go on-line to www.usda.gov/our-agency/initiatives/veterans

AT THE FAIR IN 2019

Another Jackson County Fair, the 151st fair, has come and gone and your Jackson County Veteran Service was there meetin' & greetin' and takin' names... This year, at least, we had some cover over our heads to shade us from the sun (and the "moisture" from above).

We were there ready to serve, fully equipped with the mobile office and Wi-Fi. This years temperatures made it quite comfortable and our location was strategically located between the 4-H food stand, MN Dairy Association Ice Cream Shake trailer and "Butts & Bones" BBQ trailer. Are you seeing a pattern here?



This year we shared our space with the MN Army National Guard, SFC Ted Berg and SSG Tyler Denherder.

We had VA informational brochures on hand as well as the Internet to search for answers to any questions that were asked. Our new banner has the mural on it (which is also on our newsletter masthead) that was painted in our office hallway by Galen McCarthy, if you haven't seen it it's well worth the visit... But then don't forget to stop in and visit us too when you're there!

See you at the fair next year!



Here are steps you can take to make sure phones and vehicles are hands-free compatible:

- Use a single earphone that has a microphone; use of two earbuds is illegal.
- Pair your phone to your vehicle's current Bluetooth system.
- Use an auxiliary cable to connect to your phone's earphone jack to the vehicle's car AUX jack.
- If the vehicle has a cassette player, purchase an adapter that fits into the cassette player.
- Purchase a holder that clips to the dash, vent or cup holder to make phone use hands-free.

Remember, under the new law if you have a phone in your hand, you can be pulled over by law enforcement.

Visit www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/traffic/handsfree for fact sheets, a video and more. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety's HandsFreeMN.org site also has a variety of educational tools available for Minnesotans.

EDUCATION BENEFITS TRANSFER UPDATE

Date Published: 22 Jul 19

IMPORTANT: The new Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB) 6 to 16 year policy per DoDI 1341.13 (published on 12 Jul 2018) has been delayed until 12 January 2020.

When implemented, Soldiers must have at least 6 years but not more than 16 years of total creditable military service (*active duty and/or Selected Reserve service*) to be eligible to transfer Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefits to TEB eligible dependents. A Soldier's total years of creditable military service is calculated based on the date of the transfer request, not the date the transfer request was processed. Additionally, submission of a transfer request within the new eligibility parameters does not guarantee approval.

Soldiers are highly encouraged to submit a transfer request via MilConnect www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect as soon as they reach six creditable years of military service - do not wait! The earlier eligible Soldiers submit and receive approval for TEB, the earlier they will start fulfilling the TEB four-year additional duty service obligation.

The implementation date change is related to the latest OUSD (P&R/MPP) Post 9/11 GI Bill program guidance, DoDI 1341.13 (*published on 12 Jul 2018*).

PLEASE NOTE: Soldiers who have received a Purple

Heart are exempt from the 6 to 16 year rule and may submit a transfer request regardless of their total years of creditable service.

RA or USAR Soldiers with questions can call toll-free 1-800-872-8272. **ARNG Soldiers** with questions can call toll-free 1-866-628-5999.

"When I joined the Air Force I was so gung ho that I really wanted to apply for an "In-flight Missile Mechanic" position!"

Compliments of

www.vetfriends.com/ugc/military_jokes/military_jokes.cfm

MAKETHECONNECTION

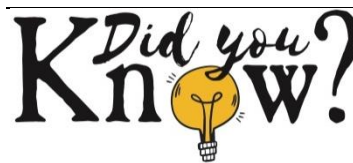
To boost our efforts in supporting military Veterans in and around Jackson County, we are reaching out on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs to be sure the link www.MakeTheConnection.net is promoted.

Launched in 2011, "MakeTheConnection.net" connects Veterans, their family members and friends, and other advocates with mental health information, local resources, and Veterans' own inspiring stories of recovery. Visitors can learn about the signs of mental health conditions or substance use problems and find sources of support. The site is free and accessible to everyone.

Please check out the following pages and add one or more of them to your favorites:

- *Problems with alcohol or drugs:* <https://maketheconnection.net/symptoms/alcohol-drug-problems>
- *Suicide:* <https://maketheconnection.net/conditions/suicide>
- *Group therapy and peer/mentor support:* <https://maketheconnection.net/stories/715>

By including this link we can help reach even more Veterans and their supporters in our county, showing them that treatment works and recovery is possible.



...You can get your VA medical records online!

The VA's online tools can help you view, organize, and share your VA medical records and personal health information. Find out if you're eligible and how to sign in to start using these tools.

You'll need to go to eBenefits to authorize us to share your health information through the Veterans Health Information Exchange. Learn how to sign in at www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vapii

VA Blue Button

First, sign in to view your VA medical records at www.myhealth.va.gov/

Try signing in with your **DS Logon**, **My HealtheVet**, or **ID.me** account. If you don't have any of those accounts, you can create one. Check it out at www.va.gov/health-care/get-medical-records

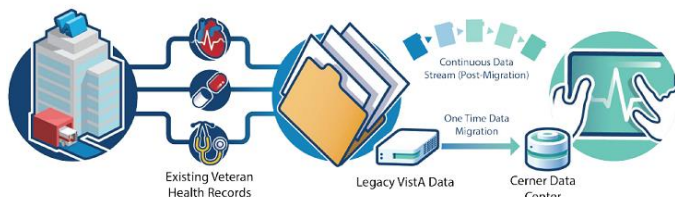
Once logged in you can order your prescription meds, check your health charting, use secure messaging and check on your benefits...

Need help? Call your local CVSO!

VA ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

VA's Long-awaited electronic health record solution hits major milestone

VA has migrated health records for 23.5 million unique Veterans to the new Cerner EHR



For years, VA employees, Veterans and community care providers have looked forward to a seamless electronic health record (EHR) solution to improve patient care and support.

Recently, that dream came closer to becoming reality with the successful transfer of 23.5 million Veterans' health records to a shared data center with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). This massive accomplishment sets the stage for the "go-live" of VA's EHR solution next year.

Go-live refers to the point when the current health record system, called Veterans Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA), is "turned off" within a facility, and VA's new EHR system will be "turned on." During go-live, all designated systems and services will transition to the new VA EHR platform.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie shared VA's community sentiments: "For decades, VA and DoD have been struggling to achieve interoperability and seamlessly share patient records between our health systems — placing an unfair burden on our Veterans and their families. No Veteran, family member or caregiver should have to carry boxes of paper, medical and service records around. This data migration is the first step to solving that problem for good."

This initial data migration phase, which began in late spring, foreshadows even more exciting improvements to come. When the new EHR completes implementation, it will replace the 130 plus instances of the current VistA system in a streamlined solution that also powers DoD's Military Health System (MHS GENESIS).

To put the magnitude of this OEHRM milestone into perspective, here are some fun data facts:

- Collectively, over 78 billion records have been compiled from all VA medical centers to include in this transfer.
- These records total 50 terabytes (equivalent to about 850,000 hours of music) of data storage.
- This data spans 21 clinical domains of patient health records, which includes lab results; pharmacy prescriptions; inpatient and outpatient diagnoses and procedures; and other Veteran medical data.

This milestone moves VA one step closer toward achieving an interoperable EHR system that will provide Veterans, service members and their families with a single health record and a lifetime of seamless care. The efficiency and improvements found in the EHR will also make for a more welcoming, customer-centric environment with streamlined messaging and scheduling capabilities, improved interoperability and enhanced self-service options for VA staff, Veterans and caregivers.

For more information about VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization, visit <https://www.ehrm.va.gov/>.

Jack Bates is the acting director, Data Migration and Management, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization

AIRBORNE HAZARD / BURN PIT EXPOSURE

VA enhances research and education efforts related to airborne hazards and burn pit exposure with newly restructured research hub



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently established the Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence (AHBPCE) as part of its ongoing efforts to improve health care for Veterans.

"VA is addressing Veterans concerns about the health effects of airborne hazards and burn pit exposure," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Establishing this program through the center is a testament to that and we will continue to collaborate with outside partners to ensure its ongoing success."

The AHBPCE, located at the New Jersey War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, will specialize in clinical and transitional research related to airborne hazards and burn pit exposure. The new center, which formally began operations in May 2019, will initially focus on:

- Expanding understanding of health outcomes and treatments with intensive clinical research to support Veterans that may have been affected by airborne hazards and open burn pits.

- VA providers may consult with the AHBPCE about the assessment and treatment needs of Veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare with airborne hazard and burn pit exposure. When appropriate, Veterans may be invited for a comprehensive, multi-day health evaluation from a specialized team. Referral is done for complex clinical presentations that are unable to be diagnosed or if a development of a medical management plan is impossible to do locally.
- Veterans receiving VA-authorized care in the community may be referred for consultation or an examination for the same clinical reasons.
- Enhancing training and education initiatives to build and expand a network of specialized clinicians
- Analyzing Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry data to monitor VA's overall clinical response to exposure concerns

The center will continue to work closely with the Department of Defense and with academic partners.

For more information about AHBPCE, please visit www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/AHBPCE/index.asp.

Article by: Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

ITS STILL THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER!

It's still summer, watch the heat for your health and don't forget to hydrate with cool, clear water!

The infographic is split into two columns: Heat Exhaustion (left, yellow background) and Heat Stroke (right, red background). A central figure of a person is also split vertically to show the contrast in symptoms.

HEAT EXHAUSTION	OR	HEAT STROKE
Faint or dizzy		Throbbing headache
Excessive sweating		No sweating
Cool, pale, clammy skin		Body temperature above 103° Red, hot, dry skin
Nausea or vomiting		Nausea or vomiting
Rapid, weak pulse		Rapid, strong pulse
Muscle cramps		May lose consciousness

HEAT EXHAUSTION TREATMENT:

- Get to a cooler, air conditioned place
- Drink water if fully conscious
- Take a cool shower or use cold compresses

HEAT STROKE TREATMENT:

- Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives

CALL 9-1-1

GOIN' ON-LINE



This section was run in our very first issue and I thought it good to revisit it. 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 INTERST

- 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/>
- Mil 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

OTHER LINKS PROVIDING INFO AND ASSISTANCE

- MACV (Financial/Legal) www.mac-v.org
- Minnesota LinkVet <https://minnesotaveteran.org>
- Wounded Warrior Proj. www.woundedwarriorproject.org
- "Make the Connection" www.MakeTheConnection.net

VETERANS MALL, LODGING & VACATIONS

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

(* denotes must be still serving Active Duty, Reserve or Guard and military retirees)

Two Soldiers' were standing outside an Army Supply Room when one of them saw a sign posted on the door "Major Items" and said to the other soldier.

"I think I knew Major Items when he was a Captain!"

Compliments of www.vetfriends.com/ugc/military_jokes/military_jokes.cfm



GOLD STAR WEEKEND



SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2019

We invite families of military fallen from all wars (Iraq, Afghanistan, Desert Storm, Vietnam, Korea, WWII and conflicts in-between) to be our guests for an amazing weekend planned exclusively for you and your family at Camp Bliss, Walker, MN. You will have time to share your stories with fellow Gold Star Families, relax and laugh together and make wonderful new friends. The way you spend your time is up to you!

Numerous activities including canoeing, fishing, nature walks, paddle boarding, kayaking, biking and hiking, and too many more to list.

Cost is \$100 per family for the weekend and includes lodging and all meals. The weekend is limited to a total of 25 people including children.

To Register: Fill out the registration form and return it with your payment to Independent Lifestyles.

We need to receive your registration ten (10) days prior to retreat date



For more information about Camp Bliss:
www.campbliss.org



The cost to send 1 Veteran to Camp Bliss for a weekend retreat is \$400, which includes lodging and all meals. Because of donations/sales from our 2018 Guns and Goods Raffle, we are able to supplement \$325 per Veteran, up to 50 Veterans.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST!

Commentary – Jeff Gay

Much can be said about the effects of sounds, smells and sights to bring back memories to a person. While working the VSO tent at the Jackson County Fair I had several meals at the 4-H food building.

As an “old” soldier I was awe struck as I gazed at the aesthetics of the outside of the building and again at the sounds and smells wafting through the window screens and doors. Not to mention the menu and info. postings by the door and front of the serving line shelter area.

I entered finding a serving line fronting a busy kitchen where people were cooking, stocking product and manning the three-sink pot & pan washing area. I stood there taking it all in for a few moments, the memories listening to the cacophony of familiar sounds and the myriad aromas of tasty fare invade my olfactory senses.

I received my food and moved to a seat at a table and was wowed again by the sights. Same unfinished walls with exposed framing and identical long tables covered in the same plastic coated table coverings and folding chairs. I think the very same flies came to torment me here too! **Ahhhhhhhh, the memories!**

The only thing missing was having to present my old mess card, DD form 714, that allowed me to enjoy the fine dining of the old Mess Hall! Oh, emptying the trays and having to brush them off in the water heated in the

garbage can by the old gasoline fueled immersion heater! *(Be careful how much you prime it before dropping the match... Many eyebrows have been singed and faces ‘sooted’ over the years!)*



Those were the same scrub brushes issued for the latrines too and I only hope they were used separately!

Vietnam era army Mess hall...



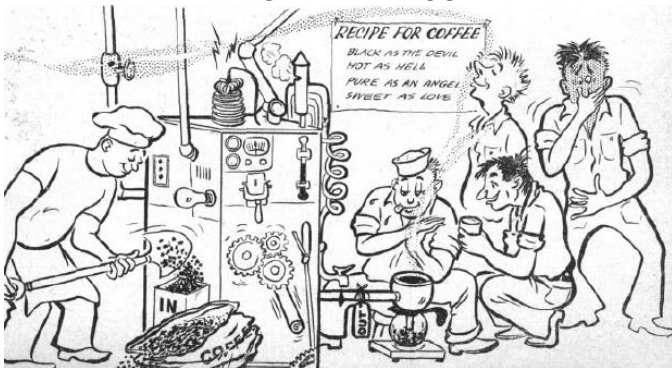
Jackson 4-H (Mess Hall) Food Stand...

Now look at the following pictures of the 4-H food stand and tell me I’m not wrong... My goodness, same architect and builders were involved in this I think... The only thing really missing is the horizontal ladder by the door!





BREWING MILITARY COFFEE



“ARMY “BLACKJACK” FIELD COFFEE”

Ingredients:

- 10gal – Water, Boiling
- 1ea – Coffee Grounds, #10 Can
- ½ qt – Cold Water (1 – Full Canteen Cup)

Directions:

1. Heat water to boiling and add one #10 can coffee grounds
2. Let grounds swirl in boiling water, stir occasionally until water turns dark brown
3. Pour Canteen Cup of cold water into mixture to stop boiling and allow grounds to settle to the bottom of the pot

4. Pour carefully (or use strainer) into serving kettle, use with ladle to serve (Maybe issue toothpicks and floss too...)

During training exercises, the Lieutenant who was driving down a muddy back road encountered another vehicle stuck in the mud with a red-faced Colonel at the wheel.

"Your car stuck, sir?"
asked the Lieutenant as he pulled alongside.

"Nope," replied the colonel, coming over and handing him the keys. *"Yours is."*

compliments of:
www.forces.net/9-our-favourite-military-jokes-we-can-tell-public

LEGION EXTENDS MEMBERSHIP RULES



There may be good news on the horizon for those who served in the military during non-combat years. This is an issue that has been brought up numerous times over the past decades but this year it sounds as though the President of the United States will sign it into law.

The current qualifying periods have been alienating Veterans who served during non-wartime periods. During all periods there have been non-combat related jobs performed by servicemembers but only those who served in conjunction with combat qualifying periods have been accepted into the organization.

These men and women have served in uniform too and performed their jobs daily maintaining their personal readiness and that of their branch of service in the event they are called to arms.

This may help the American Legion garner a few more members but all of our service organizations are suffering with membership woes. Pass the word along to others you know who are eligible for membership in any of these organizations and help keep them strong!

Focus on the positives of what membership can do for the Veteran, their family and the community. The Legion and VFW aren't simply neighborhood bars they are gathering places with a mission to provide for our Veterans and still serving servicemembers!



"There's nothing funnier than watching a bunch of white people in corporate America who discuss diversity like they're the (expletive) experts.

*You want to see diversity?
Swing by your average infantry platoon.
It's not going to be the kumbaya utopia you might have in your head, but you'll see a bunch of people from every conceivable background who are willing to die for each other.
And it's a helluva lot more real than your mandatory diversity seminars and team building exercises."*

~ STAFF SERGEANT OLD SCHOOL

BLUE WATER NAVY UPDATE

VA Extends Agent Orange Presumption to 'Blue Water Navy' Veterans

From the St. Cloud VA Health Care System

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is preparing to process Agent Orange exposure claims for 'Blue Water Navy' Veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between 9Jan62 and 7May75.

These Veterans may be eligible for presumption of herbicide exposure through Public Law 116-23, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which was signed into law 25June19, and goes into effect 1Jan20. They may also qualify for a presumption of service connection if they have a disease that is recognized as being associated with herbicide exposure.

The bipartisan Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act gives VA until 1Jan20, to begin deciding Blue Water Navy related claims. By staying claims decisions until that date, VA is complying with the law that Congress wrote and passed.

"VA is dedicated to ensuring that all Veterans receive the benefits they have earned," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "We are working to ensure that we have the proper resources in place to meet the needs of our Blue Water Veteran community and minimize the impact on all Veterans filing for disability compensation."

Blue Water Navy Veterans are encouraged to submit disability compensation claims for conditions presumed to be related to Agent Orange exposure. Veterans over age 85 or with life-threatening illnesses will have priority in claims processing.

Veterans who previously were denied for an Agent Orange related presumptive condition can file a new claim based on the change in law. Eligible survivors of deceased Blue Water Navy Veterans also may benefit from the new law and may file claims for benefits based on the Veterans' service.

The new law affects Veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia, as defined in Public Law 116-23. An estimated 420,000 to 560,000 Vietnam-era Veterans may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans.

To qualify, under the new law, these Veterans must have a disease associated with herbicide exposure, as listed in 38 Code of Fed Regs section 3.309(e).

Agent Orange presumptive conditions are:

- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne or similar acneform disease
- Chronic B-cell leukemias
- Diabetes mellitus Type 2
- Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Hodgkin's disease
- Ischemic heart disease

- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease
- Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma).

For more information about Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam waters (Blue Water Navy Veterans), visit:

www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/

Veterans seeking more information should contact their Veterans Service Officer, call VA's toll-free number at 800-827-1000 or visit the VA Blue Water Navy Agent Orange website:

[\(www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/\)](http://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/)

A famous Admiral and an equally famous General were fishing together when a sudden storm hit. When it died down both renowned warriors were struggling helplessly in the water.

The Admiral floundered his way back to the boat and pulled himself painfully in. Then he fished out the General, using an oar.

Catching his breath, he puffed: "Please don't say a word about this to anyone. If the Navy found out I can't swim I'd be disgraced."

"Don't worry," the general retorted. "Your secret is safe. I'd hate to have my men find out I can't walk on water."

compliments of:
www.forces.net/9-our-favourite-military-jokes-we-can-tell-public

IMPORTANT TAKE-AWAYS FOR YOU!

Some good information to adhere to came out of my last meeting in the Twin Cities. Following these guidelines will make your claim easier to complete and successfully manage and my job easier!

- 1) **Read ALL correspondence** you receive from the VA immediately. There may be instructions for you to follow and information pertaining to your claim. It may be the decision you're waiting for or it may be a request for more information. **READ IT!**
 - If you don't understand it call your local CVSO for clarification.
 - Be sure to pay close attention to the suspense dates stated on the form. Many times they ask for you to complete a form or send additional evidence by a certain date. **This is critical!**

Jackson County Veteran Service Office August 2019

2) **NOTICE!** The VA will no longer be sending blank forms for you with their correspondence. If there is a form that you need to complete it will be mentioned in the body of the correspondence and possibly a link to locate it on the Internet.

- *You don't have Internet? No problem! There are a couple of ways to address that.*
 - *Have one of your kids or grandkids or a neighbor find it and print it off for you.*
 - *Most on-line forms are "Fill-in" forms which means that you can complete the form while it's on the computer screen before you print it out. This makes it easier to read than if you filled it in with a pen.*

3) **When visiting your CVSO** please be prepared by having your questions well thought out and copies of any paperwork that may be needed, especially your discharge certificate (*DD form 214*).

4) **Remember**, there must be a nexus formed for all claims. It must contain the following:

- *What was the in-service event which was causative of the issue you are now claiming?*
- *Has the issue you have progressed from its origin in the military?*
- *How can we fit these two pieces together to form a nexus?*

Some of what can be used to get to the nexus form of official documentation

- *Medical records (past and present)*
- *Witness statements*
 - *Personal statement*
 - *Military witness (or buddy) statement*
 - *Friend or family member statement*
 - *Medical statement*
- *Official or news account of the incident*
- *Anything else that may corroborate your claim*

5) **Keep your expectations realistic.** If you heard something from a friend who heard it from a friend, etc. please verify it before you expect it. Often times what you hear may be true but not necessarily for you. All claims are based on **YOUR** experiences and information and therefore are **unique** to you and nobody else. **Be advised, there is no such thing as a resident "bar stool expert"!!!!!!**

6) **Your CVSO cannot do their job** without first you doing your job. For instance, we deal with many Veterans and do our best for all of them but only the Veteran has the information required to get that job done. Be sure that if your CVSO asks you for something you do your best to find it and get it. There are some things we can assist with but the bulk of what is needed is either squirreled away at your home or in your head.

Thank you all for your service and I look forward to working with you together!

EDUCATION



It's that time again, crunch time! College is just around the corner and although it's pretty late to start looking for help there's never any time but the present! Below are some links and ideas where you can go to get help and or ideas of how to supplement college finances or that of your child's!

Let's begin with your military education benefits...

The best place to go for help with this is you college or university's on-site expert, the

VA education and training benefits

VA education benefits help Veterans, service members, and their qualified family members with needs like paying college tuition, finding the right school or training program, and getting career counseling. Learn how to apply for and manage the education and training benefits you've earned. www.va.gov/education/

To learn more about GI Bill benefits go here: www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/

Then there's the Minnesota GI Bill!

The Minnesota GI Bill program provides assistance to eligible Minnesota Veterans, currently serving military, National Guard and Reserve members who served after September 11, 2001 and eligible spouse and children. The Program provides a maximum benefit of \$10,000, up to age 62. Eligible participants can use the benefit in Higher Education, On-the-job (OJT) training /Apprenticeship or License and Certification.

This program is different than the Federal GI Bill (*Montgomery, Post 9-11, Veterans Education Assistance Program, Dependents Education Assistance Program, or Vocational rehabilitation*). For more information go to <https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/education/minnesotagibill/>

MDVA's Higher Education Veterans Programs (HEVP) helps connect you with educational benefits and resources to succeed in college. We support the success of Veterans, current military members and their families at Minnesota's colleges and universities by providing on-site comprehensive information about benefits and resources as well as creating institutional readiness in support of the unique needs of these students. **Your local HEVP rep. in SW MN is:**

Southwest Minnesota State University

1501 State St. – Marshall, MN 56258

Coordinator: Justin Guggisberg

justin.guggisberg@smsu.edu • 507.537.7213

LEGION EXTENDS MEMBERSHIP RULES

...ADDENDUM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

In a significant legislative victory for The American Legion, President Trump signed a bill July 30 that declares the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941.

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The American Legion sought the declaration as a way to honor approximately 1,600 U.S. servicemembers who were killed or wounded during previously undeclared periods of war.

The **LEGION Act** (*Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National service act*) also opens the door for approximately 6 million veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible.

“Recognizing the service of these wartime veterans is the right thing to do and it is long overdue,” National Commander Brett Reistad said. *“The families of those who were killed or wounded during these wartime acts should take pride in knowing that we recognize their sacrifice and service. Moreover, we are proud to welcome any of the six million living veterans from the previously unrecognized periods into our organization and call them ‘Legionnaires.’”*

Now that the legislation has been signed, The American Legion’s eligibility criteria immediately changes from seven war eras to two: April 6, 1917, to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941 to a time later determined by the federal government. No other restrictions to American Legion membership are changed.

The law’s journey began on Feb. 14 when Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., introduced S. 504, along with Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C. A companion measure, H.R. 1641, was introduced in the House by Reps. Lou Correa, D-Calif., and Ben Cline, R-Va.

Reistad expressed gratitude to the bipartisan members of Congress for passing the legislation.

“We are grateful that President Trump fully acknowledges the importance of The American Legion by signing the LEGION Act in the White House today – just one week after it passed the House of Representatives,” Reistad said. *“In an era of partisan gridlock, Republicans and Democrats in Congress overwhelmingly recognized the importance of allowing thousands of honorable but previously ineligible veterans the right to join the largest and most influential veterans organization in the country.”*

Reistad pointed out that existing American Legion membership applications are in the process of being updated but can still be used. “In the meantime, I recommend that prospective Legionnaires and recruiters write ‘LEGION Act’ in the eligibility date section of American Legion membership applications if they fall outside the previous war eras.”

Reistad said. *“The larger pool of veterans now eligible for The American Legion will also open their family members to eligibility in the Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary as well.”*

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



OR TEXT TO “838255”

**Veterans
Linkage Line™**

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

HOW COPY? OVER...

GOOD COPY! OUT!

DON'T FORGET – LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices

or visit online at www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans

See y'all next month!



The sole responsibility for content is

Jeffrey Gay, Jackson Veteran's Service Officer.

A Sergeant was addressing a squad of 25 and said:
"I have a nice easy job for the laziest man here. Put up your hand if you are the laziest."

When 24 men raised their hands, the Sergeant asked the other man: *"Why didn't you raise your hand?"*

The man replied: *"It take's too much effort to raise my hand Sarge."*

compliments of:

www.forces.net/9-our-favourite-military-jokes-we-can-tell-public

Jackson County Veteran Service Office August 2019