



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 2

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

February 2020

This publication is for 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](mailto: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

## WORDS & STUFF

There may be some words and acronyms included in this newsletter that you don't see or use on a regular basis. If you see a word or an acronym highlighted in yellow with GREEN BOLD print you can go to the end of this newsletter for a glossary of it with the good old Webster meanings.

## Protect Your Own 'Six'

MyHealtheVET - In the Spotlight

Care for your back throughout the day

Almost everyone experiences back pain now and then. But there are simple things you can do every day to ease your pain.

Whether mild or severe, pain can change your daily life. Taking care of your back now will help you lower the chances of feeling back pain later. We have a few tips to help you ease the pain and protect your back:

- **Warm-up for the day:** Do a few slow, cat-like stretches before starting your day.
- **Shift positions often:** At work and home, change positions often. If you can, get up and move every 30 minutes.
- **Walk each day:** A daily walk keeps your back and thigh muscles stretched and strong. (often times a walking stick or ski poles can help w/cadence)



### Create healthy habits

- Keep a **healthy weight**. When you weigh too much, your back is under the excess strain.
  - [www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthevet/ss20190506-achieve-your-healthy-weight](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthevet/ss20190506-achieve-your-healthy-weight)
- Try not to overeat. Watch your **servicing sizes**.
  - [www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Standard/S06\\_MakingHealthyFoodChoicesWithAHealthyPlate.pdf](http://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Standard/S06_MakingHealthyFoodChoicesWithAHealthyPlate.pdf)
- Handle minor aches with **cold and heat**. Apply cold the first 24-48 hours. Use heat after that. Always place a thin cloth between your skin and the source of cold or heat.
  - [www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Veteran\\_Public/Complementary\\_Treatments.asp](http://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Veteran_Public/Complementary_Treatments.asp)
- Take medications as directed. This helps keep pain under control. Always read labels and talk to your health care team if you have any questions.

Remember: you may need extra help with learning how to adjust. Talk to your doctor using the **Secure Messaging** option/portal at [www.myhealth.va.gov/](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/) (sign in required) to determine which approach works best for you.

## SPECIAL DAYS

**February is:** Black History Month and American Heart Month

- 1 – National Freedom Day
- 2 – Ground Hog Day & Super Bowl Sunday
- 3 – **Four Chaplains Day**
- 3 – **Jackson VSO “Traveling Office” at Lakefield, MN**
- 14 – Valentine’s Day
- 17 – President’s Day **(OFFICE CLOSED)**
- 19 – **Coast Guard Reserve Birthday**
- 24 – World Bartender Day *Tip ‘em good!!!!!!*
- 26 – Ash Wednesday
- 28 – Public Sleeping Day *Really? In that case, my favorite!*
- 29 – Leap Year Day! *It only comes once every four years!*



Your Jackson County CVSO will be on the KKOJ Morning Show the **2<sup>nd</sup> 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...

### DO YOU GAME?????

VA Official Blog Site

Most Veterans who have served in the past 20 years are probably familiar with video games. From barracks LAN parties, to marathon sessions of *Madden NFL* at the **MWR** while downrange, it’s safe to say Veterans like to play video games. Studies have shown that video games also help Veterans recover from some mental health challenges, providing



an escape while boosting confidence, personal growth, leadership, and social connections.

Operation Supply Drop’s “Games to Grunts” program supports community engagement to Veterans, military, and their families through video games. Most of the games they offer are on Steam, such as *TEKKEN 7*, *Cooking Simulator* and *Vietnam 65’*, but other platforms are also available, like free XBOX Game Passes. All of the games are available through digital download codes.

### First come, first serve

Game publishers and others donate game keys to Games to Grunts, which in turn distributes the games. Because not all games are distributed with unlimited keys, it is a first come first serve model.

Eligibility is determined through ID.me, a third-party identify verification service that is also available to use on VA.gov.

Games to Grunts™ is an **OSD** program in partnership with “ID.me” and “Rip It Energy” providing gaming keys to Veterans.

To sign up, visit the Games to Grunts website (<https://gamestogrunts.weareosd.org/account/register>) and create an account, or view the full list of games available on their website at <https://gamestogrunts.weareosd.org/collections/all>.

*Games to Grunts is a program of Operation Supply Drop, a chapter based Veteran Service Organization 501c3.*

### ANY TIME’S THE RIGHT TIME; REMEMBER THE SUITCASE...

CVSO Jeffrey L. Gay

**OK, you got me...** That’s **NOT** original, just a little different spin on a popular restaurant jingle... But it’s oh so true! We all love (*and need*) a good vacation so always consider the Boy Scout Motto, “**Be Prepared!**”

**In late summer you have** the “Dog Days” but by February you begin to experience “Cabin Fever”, unless of course you’re already a “snow bird”...

**A vacation can be a bit of a burden** on your pocket book but, as a Veteran, there are ways to lessen the impact your wallet will experience. I’m listing just a few ideas for you to consider.

**First and foremost I have to mention** that traveling within the United States and it’s territories is safest for you with current world events as they are. If you do travel outside of the **contiguous** United States please be aware of posted travel restrictions and warnings set forth by the US State Department and/or Homeland Security for your safety. **BE SURE YOUR PASSPORT IS CURRENT AND/OR YOU HAVE A STATE DRIVERS LICENSE WITH “REAL ID”.**

**A couple of sites that may be important** for you to check before you travel are:



For foreign travel tips and suggestions go on-line to <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>

For travel warnings and restrictions go on-line to <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>

Another site with great information for you is [www.usa.gov/americans-abroad](http://www.usa.gov/americans-abroad)

Tips to navigate TSA can be found at [www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification](http://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification)

- 1) **WIN THE LOTTERY!!!!** Alright, that's a pipe dream but we can always try...
- 2) **Several military organizations** provide travel programs for you to include discounts and vacation planners.
- 3) **There are also individual discounts** provided through various companies to include Amtrak!

**Spontaneity can always be fun as you travel.** Turn off the beaten path and check out the local fare!

**Planning ahead** for your vacation and your travel will actually help you and not hinder the free spirit in you. A great place to start is a site I found to make sure that you don't forget anything important in planning and packing! It may especially help if you are packing to fly and have to go through TSA. (*Packing clothes, not "packing" 9mm*)

**Travel Planner**

<https://wanderstation.com/travel-planning-guide/>

**"Happiness is... that moment when boarding is complete and the seat next to you is empty!"**

## **JET SET DISABLED VETS ON SPACE-A FLIGHTS**

VA Official Blog Site

When congress signed the *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act* last year, [www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5515/text](http://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5515/text)

100% service connected disabled Veterans became eligible for Space Available Travel. Better known as **'Space-A'** or military hops, Air Mobility Command (AMC) maintains an extensive network of flights throughout the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa. Supplementing this network, several Air National Guard and Naval Aviation Units have flights available.



**To be eligible for Space-A flights**, Veterans must have a permanent and total service-connected disability rating. These Vets must also obtain a DD Form 2765, "Department of Defense/Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (TAN).

**The Space-A Program** fills surplus capacity and seating on **DOD** aircraft. A popular perk among retirees, now eligible Veterans can take advantage of the program and fly for free. So, whether the Veteran is looking for a getaway to Hawaii or a trip to catch-up with their Veteran



brothers and sisters on the other side of the country, the Space-A travel program can fly you there.

### **Some things to know before flying Space-A:**

- *Disabled Veterans, along with retirees, are in priority group 6. This means active service members on emergency leave; post deployment respite and other important transportation needs will have priority.*
- *A contingency plan and resources, including commercial airfare, need to be available in case of a scheduling change or sudden unavailability.*
- *Dependents of disabled Veterans are not eligible for Space-A travel.*

**Eligible Veterans** looking for flights should review schedules at AMC passenger terminals. Most AMC terminals, on military bases or at commercial airports, have a Facebook page that posts flight schedules and seat availability. Once a flight and destination are selected the Veteran can register in person at the terminal, or by email/fax.

**Disabled Veterans**, with a little flexibility and patience, are taking to the sky for free with Space-A travel and seeing more of the country thankful for their service and sacrifice.

*For more information including: eligibility, locations, schedules, baggage, contact info, and; to register for the Space-Available Travel Email Sign-Up visit the Air Mobility Command—Space Available Travel Page. [www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page/](http://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page/)*

## **AMTRAK PASSENGER DISCOUNT FOR MILITARY VETERANS**

VA Official Blog Site

**Veterans receive a 10% discount** on the lowest available rail fare on most Amtrak trains. For more information go online to the Amtrak Military Veterans site at [www.amtrak.com/veterans-discount](http://www.amtrak.com/veterans-discount)

**Use the Fare Finder** at the beginning of your search on [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) and select 'Military Veteran' for each passenger as appropriate to receive the discount.

**Military Personnel Save 10% and Get Ahead of the Ticket Line**

With valid active-duty United States Armed Forces identification cards, active-duty U.S. military members, their spouses and their dependents are eligible to receive a 10% discount on the lowest available rail fare on most trains, including for travel on the Auto Train.

Just use the Fare Finder at the beginning of your search on [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) and select 'Military' for each passenger as appropriate to receive the discount.



Additionally, Amtrak supports and thanks troops by welcoming uniformed military personnel to the head of the ticket line.

### Discount Limitations

- The Veteran/military discount is not valid with Saver Fares or weekday Acela trains.
- The Veteran/military discount does not apply to non-Acela Business class, First-Class or sleeping accommodation. Veterans can upgrade upon payment of the full accommodation charges.
- The Veteran/military discount is not valid for travel on certain Amtrak Thruway connecting services or the Canadian portion of services operated jointly by Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada.
- The Veteran/military discount may not be combined with other discount offers; refer to the terms and conditions for each offer.
- Additional restrictions may apply.

Visit [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) for more information.

The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products and services on part of the VA.

**"I sure wish 'travel therapy' was covered by my health insurance."**

## NEW AT MSP FOR MILITARY TRAVELERS



Ok, it's new and it's not new! The Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC) has had a presence at MSP since November 22, 1970 but now it has been fully remodeled and moved to a new location!

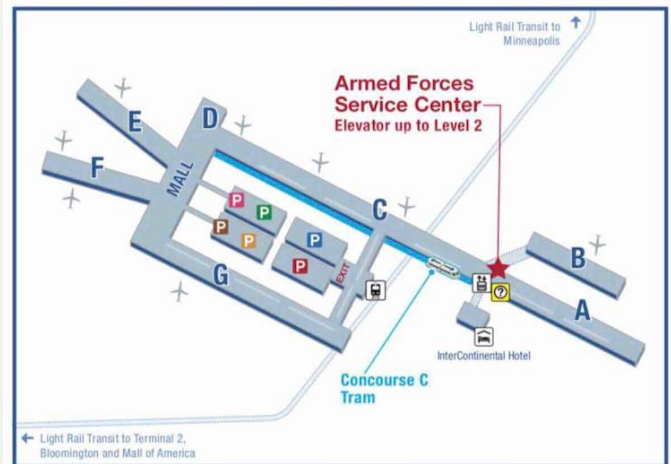
Active duty military personnel and their dependents, activated National Guard and Reserves, Military Retirees (w/Retiree ID), DoD personnel and Dept. of Public Health (on orders) and uniformed allied military personnel from all around the world are eligible to use the facility.

The facility is manned 100% by volunteers. If you would like to become a volunteer please give them a call at 612.726.9155 or e-mail to [afsc\\_msp@mnaafsc.org](mailto:afsc_msp@mnaafsc.org).



The Armed Forces Service Center has moved to inside security at the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport. **The 24-hour**

facility is now located at the entrance to the A Concourse, on level two. Take the tram on Concourse C or the moving walkways throughout Terminal 1 after 11:00 PM, to the far end. Follow the signs in the rotunda area to the elevator near the information counter. Center: (612) 726-9155



### New location inside of security, open 24-7

#### Amenities include:

- A lounge area with four sofas, six recliners, and two large TVs
- A dining room with seating for 10
- A larger, updated kitchen
- Business center with outlets for charging devices and space to spread out your work
- Flight Information displays (a big plus for the AFSC's visitors)
- Baggage room to store carry-on bags
- Three restrooms
- A shower room, available upon request
- 10 bunks for females and 30 bunks for males, available upon request (and a "wake-up" service)
- Space for nursing moms to express milk (lactation room)
- Cribs in both female and male bunk rooms
- Children's playroom

4300 Glumack Drive - LT A-2021  
MSP International Airport - St. Paul, MN 55111  
[www.mnaafsc.org](http://www.mnaafsc.org)

**NOTE: There are AFSC's located at most major airports around the world. When travelling just ask at the information desk for the Servicemen's Center.**

## PX/BX COMMISARY PRIVILEGES!

Do you remember your first visit to the Post or Base EXCHANGE™ Exchange (similar to that of a civilian Wal-mart)? If you were Army it's a PX or if you're Navy or Air Force it's a BX. Some of you would also wander through the Commissary (similar to a large grocery store). These facilities are owned and managed by the Army Air Force Exchange Services (AAFES).

If you're like me you were like a kid in a candy store when you went in there. It provided a feeling of normalcy compared to what you were experiencing and also provided a place to shop. To make it more "normal" for todays servicemembers you can even do it on-line at

[www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com)! They even have their own credit card available!!!!

It's not so much that the prices are a lot cheaper than at regular stores. You can usually beat the prices if you watch your local sale fliers or ads. The big thing is the quality of goods as well as the ability to get uniforms and accessories if you're still serving. The big thing, however, is that there are no taxes at these stores!

### This year your AAFES Exchange Services celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Where are the closest AAFES stores near us? Well, none are extremely close but if you're traveling you can always stop at one at nearly every military installation. Those that are closest to us include:

Camp Ripley, MN Little Falls, MN	PX
Fort McCoy, WI Sparta/Tomah, WI	PX/Commissary
934 <sup>th</sup> Air wing, Mpls IAP Minneapolis, MN	BX
Offutt Air Base Omaha, NE	BX/Commissary
SD Air National Guard Sioux Falls, SD	BX (Small)
Grand Force Air Base Grand Forks, ND	BX/Commissary

For more on this and whether or not you are able to gain access to any of these please go on-line to:

[www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/70068/dod-answers-top-10-questions-expanded-commissary-exchange-mwr-access/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/70068/dod-answers-top-10-questions-expanded-commissary-exchange-mwr-access/)

## WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

VSO Jeffrey L. Gay

What do you think of when you think of homelessness? I believe that most people consider it as having no place to live or stay so they live in their cars, under bridges, vacant homes or buildings, etc.



Well, you're mostly right that does account for many of them but there are really other definitions as well:

- **Unsheltered**, or living in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. car, storage unit, etc.)
- **Temporarily doubled-up** with family or friends due to homelessness
- **Hopping from "couch to couch"** with friends and/or acquaintances.
- **In a shelter**, using a hotel voucher, or in a transitional housing program.



In any case, being homeless is tough and nobody should have to be, especially this time of the year. I don't believe that it's a crisis in Jackson County but you never really know. The guy sitting beside you at the coffee shop

may have no place to sleep tonight, or the family you see sitting in the library.

There are programs out there to help others but first two things must happen:

1. They need to be identified
2. They are willing to accept the help

Many are too proud to ask for help or, if there's drugs or alcohol involved, they are too embarrassed or suspicious. It's up to the rest of us to make sure, once they are identified, that people are notified to make a check on the individual, to make that first contact.

Don't be shy, do your part! If they are a Veteran there is additional assistance for them and one is found by calling your local CVSO or nearest MACV office. ([www.mac-v.org](http://www.mac-v.org))

## INFLUENZA, SARS, CORONAVIRUS...

Jeffrey I. Gay

WHAT'S NEXT!!!! Who knows but we do know what's "now" and it scares the bejesus outa me!

On the positive side, there are people aware and working on battling anything that comes our way. With that said **ITS UP TO US** to heed their warnings and take the necessary precautions. Below are just a few things I've picked up to help keep you safe and healthy:

- **Listen** – Stay abreast of the news and what's going on around you.
- **Do** – Follow the directives provided by the CDC and our doctors. **GET VACCINATED!** Although at this point it doesn't sound like there's an effective vaccine specifically for Coronavirus the CDC says its still not too late to get your flu shot.
- **Remember** – Wash your hands and keep hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol based) with you at all times and use it often!
- **Inform** – Let all who you know that it is up to them as well to pass on current accurate information! Teach your children to be careful and wash their hands often and to keep their fingers out of their mouths and cover their coughs.

## ITS NOT TOO LATE TO GET YOU FLU SHOT!

It's not too late to get your flu vaccination, as the season continues well into spring. To protect yourself, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends receiving a yearly flu vaccination. In addition, it suggests washing your hands, covering your mouth when you cough and sneeze, and staying home and away from others when you're sick.

To make it easier for our Veterans, the VA has several methods for getting a vaccination.

### VA Medical Facilities.

VA offers free flu vaccinations at all VA medical centers and community-based outpatient clinics. Veterans simply



need to ask their primary care providers for the vaccination when they visit.



### **Care in the community**

To the left is an illustration of the flu virus.

**Walgreens.** Veterans enrolled with VA health care can receive a no-cost vaccination through the Retail Immunization Care Coordination Program. The program is available at 9,600-plus Walgreens pharmacies nationally. Veterans need to present their Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC) and another form of photo ID to receive a vaccination. To find the nearest Walgreens, call 800-925-4733 or visit [www.walgreens.com/storelocator/find.jsp](http://www.walgreens.com/storelocator/find.jsp).

### **Community Care Network (CCN) Contracts**

CCN-eligible Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care and located in CCN Regions 1, 2 and 3 can receive their vaccine at any CVS Caremark through March 31, 2020. Caremark is the CCN in-network pharmacy provider. No appointment is required. CCN-eligible Veterans can visit a CVS Caremark in-network pharmacy, tell the pharmacist they receive care at a VA medical facility and show at least one government-issued photo ID to get the shot. For more information about CVS Caremark in-network pharmacy locations and hours, visit [vacommunitycare.com/flushot](http://vacommunitycare.com/flushot).

### **Urgent Care In-network locations**

Veterans can receive a vaccine, paid for by VA, at an in-network urgent care location. The shot must be administered in conjunction with a condition requiring urgent care. For more information, go online to the website [www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent\\_Care.asp](http://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care.asp). Beginning March 2, Veterans residing in CCN Region 1 can receive a flu vaccine at an in-network urgent care location. Region 1 states are: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia.

### **Community Providers**

Veterans receiving VA-authorized community care can receive the vaccine from their community provider.

### **The current season**

The flu season is off to a fast start. For the week ending Jan. 11, the CDC classified 48 states as having “widespread” outbreaks. The highest rates of infection are within the age groups 50-64 and over 65. Those groups are prime demographics for VA’s Veteran population. You can track weekly national trends at the CDC website [www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/usmap.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/usmap.htm).

### **For more information, please visit**

[www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/immunization.asp](http://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/immunization.asp) or [www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/vaccination/index.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/vaccination/index.asp).



**NEVER EVER  
MIX UP YOUR  
MOUSSE  
WITH YOUR  
HUSBAND'S  
SPRAY FOAM  
INSULATION  
CAN!!!!!!**



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## **VA BENEFITS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS**

If you're serving on active duty in the United States uniformed services, including active National Guard and Reserve with federal pay, you may be eligible for VA benefits both during service and after separation or retirement. If you're a traditional or technical member of the National Guard and Reserve, you may also be eligible for some VA benefits. Find out which benefits you may qualify for—and when to apply. You'll also learn about these benefits in your required Transition Assistance Program (TAP) briefing.

### **VA benefits you can use during and after service**

#### **GI Bill and other education benefits**

Find out if you qualify for VA education benefits to help pay for school or training. If you qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, learn how to transfer your unused benefits to your spouse or dependent children.

**Open to service members and Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)**

#### **Certificate of Eligibility for a VA-backed home loan**

Review the requirements for getting a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) to buy, build, improve, or refinance a home.

**Open to service members and Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)**

#### **Life insurance for you and your family**

Find out if you qualify for and how to manage your **SGLI** coverage, and learn about coverage options for you and your family after separation or retirement.

**Open to service members and Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)**

### **Time-sensitive VA benefits to consider when separating or retiring**

#### **Pre-discharge disability claim**

If you have an illness or injury that you believe was caused—or made worse—by your service, learn how to file a disability claim through the Benefits Delivery at Discharge program. This may help speed up your claim so you can get your benefits sooner. You'll need to file 180 to 90 days before separation.

**Jackson County Veteran Service Office February 2020**

Open to active-duty service members, Guard members, and Reservists

### Converting your life insurance after separation

Find out how to convert your SGLI coverage to a Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) or commercial policy. Learn about other options for coverage if you have service-connected disabilities. In some cases, you must act within 120 days of separation to ensure no lapse in coverage.

Open to service members and Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)

### Educational and career counseling

Get support transitioning to a civilian career with free educational and career counseling (also called Chapter 36). You'll need to apply between 6 months before and 1 year after separation.

Open to active-duty service members and Veterans only

### Active-duty service members and VA health care

Learn about your health care options after separation or retirement and how to apply for VA health care when you receive your separation or retirement orders. If you're a combat Veteran, apply right away to take advantage of 5 years of enhanced eligibility.

Open to active-duty service members and Veterans only

### Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

If you have a service-connected disability that limits your ability to work or prevents you from working, find out how to apply for vocational rehab. You can apply up to 12 years from when you receive your notice of separation or your first VA disability rating.

Open to service members and Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)

## Other VA benefits to consider as a Veteran

### Disability compensation

File a claim for disability compensation for conditions related to your military service, and manage your benefits over time.

Open to Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)

### Support for Veteran-owned small businesses

If you served on active duty, register to do business with VA and get support for your Veteran-owned small business. If you have a service-connected disability related to active-duty service or training, you may qualify to register as a service-disabled Veteran-owned small business.

Open to Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)

### Veterans Pension program

If you served on active duty during wartime, are at least 65 years old or have a service-connected disability, and have limited or no income, find out if you qualify for Veterans Pension benefits.

Open to active-duty Veterans only

### Aid and attendance or housebound allowance

If you need help with your daily activities or you're housebound, check whether you're eligible to have increased aid added to your monthly Veterans Pension payments.

Open to active-duty Veterans only

### Disability housing grants

If you have a service-connected disability, find out how to apply for a housing grant to make changes to your home so you can live more independently.

Open to Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)

### More life insurance options

Explore life insurance coverage options and services for you and your family, and manage your policy online.

Open to Veterans (active duty, Guard, and Reserve)

### Pre-need eligibility determination for burial in a VA national cemetery

Apply for a pre-need eligibility decision letter to confirm that you qualify for burial in a VA national cemetery. This can help you pre-plan, and it can make the process easier for your family members in their time of need.

Open to active-duty Veterans only



## RADIO CONTROL DRONES

Is this how  
the next war's  
gonna  
be fought????

## VA PRIORITY GROUPS

### What are VA priority groups and how do they affect me?

When you apply for VA health care, we'll assign you to 1 of 8 priority groups. This system helps to make sure that Veterans who need care right away can get signed up quickly. It also helps to make sure we can provide high quality care to all Veterans enrolled in the VA health care program.

### Your priority group may affect:

- How soon we sign you up for health care benefits, **and**
- How much (if anything) you'll have to pay toward the cost of your care

### What factors will VA use to assign me to a priority group?

### We'll base your priority group on:

- Your military service history, **and**
- Your disability rating, **and**
- Your income level, **and**
- Whether or not you qualify for Medicaid, **and**
- Other benefits you may be receiving (like VA pension benefits)

We assign Veterans with service-connected disabilities the highest priority. We assign the lowest priority to Veterans who earn a higher income and who don't have

Jackson County Veteran Service Office February 2020

any service-connected disabilities qualifying them for disability compensation (*monthly payments*).

If you qualify for more than one priority group, we'll assign you to the highest one.

### **Priority group 1**

**We may assign you to priority group 1 if any of the below descriptions are true. You:**

- *Have a service-connected disability that we've rated as 50% or more disabling, or*
- *Have a service-connected disability that we've concluded makes you unable to work (also called unemployable), or*
- *Received the Medal of Honor (MOH)*

### **Priority group 2**

**We may assign you to priority group 2 if you have a service-connected disability that we've rated as 30% or 40% disabling.**

### **Priority group 3**

**We may assign you to priority group 3 if any of the below descriptions are true. You:**

- *Are a former prisoner of war (POW), or*
- *Received the Purple Heart medal, or*
- *Were discharged for a disability that was caused by—or got worse because of—your active-duty service, or*
- *Have a service-connected disability that we've rated as 10% or 20% disabling, or*
- *Were awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C § 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"*

### **Priority group 4**

**We may assign you to priority group 4 if either of the below descriptions is true. You:**

- *Are receiving VA aid and attendance or housebound benefits, or*
- *Have received a VA determination of being catastrophically disabled*

### **Priority group 5**

**We may assign you to priority group 5 if any of the below descriptions are true. You:**

- *Don't have a service-connected disability, or you have a non-compensable service-connected disability that we've rated as 0% disabling, and you have an annual income level that's below our adjusted income limits (based on your resident zip code), or*
- *Are receiving VA pension benefits, or*
- *Are eligible for Medicaid programs*

### **Priority group 6**

**We may assign you to priority group 6 if any of the below descriptions are true. You:**

- *Have a compensable service-connected disability that we've rated as 0% disabling, or*
- *Were exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or*

- *Participated in **Project 112/SHAD**, or*
- *Served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, or*
- *Served in the Persian Gulf War between August 2, 1990, and November 11, 1998, or*
- *Served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987*

**We may also assign you to priority group 6 if you meet all of the requirements listed below. You:**

- *Are currently or newly enrolled in VA health care, and*
- *Served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, or were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, and*
- *Were discharged less than 5 years ago*

**Note:** As a returning combat Veteran, you're eligible for these enhanced benefits for 5 years after discharge. At the end of this enhanced enrollment period, we'll assign you to the highest priority group you qualify for at that time.

### **Priority group 7**

**We may assign you to priority group 7 if both of the below descriptions are true for you:**

- *Your gross household income is below the geographically adjusted income limits (GMT) for where you live, and*
- *You agree to pay copays*

### **Priority group 8**

**We may assign you to priority group 8 if both of the below descriptions are true for you:**

- *Your gross household income is above VA income limits and geographically adjusted income limits for where you live, and*
- *You agree to pay copays*

If you're assigned to priority group 8, your eligibility for VA health care benefits will depend on which subpriority group we place you in.

## **Once I'm enrolled in VA health care, will my priority group ever change?**

**Your priority group may change in some cases, such as if:**

- *Your income changes, or*
- *Your service-connected disability gets worse and we give you a higher disability rating*

**If you're currently enrolled or newly enrolled in the VA health care program, and you served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, or were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, you're eligible for enhanced benefits for 5 years after discharge. During this time, we'll assign you to priority group 6. At the end of this enhanced enrollment period, we'll assign you to the highest priority group you qualify for at that time.**





## WORDS & STUFF GLOSSARY

<b>Commissary</b>	a store that sells food and supplies <i>(to the personnel or workers in a military post, mining camp, lumber camp, or the like)</i>
<b>contiguous</b>	<b>Lower 48 States</b> <i>(for example)</i> 1) touching; in contact. 2) in close proximity without actually touching; near.
<b>DoD</b>	<b>Department of Defense</b>
<b>OSD</b>	<b>Office of the Secretary of Defense</b>
<b>MACV</b>	<b>MN Assistance Council for Veterans</b>
<b>MSP</b>	<b>Minneapolis St Paul</b> <i>(Int'l Airport)</i>
<b>MWR</b>	<b>Morale Welfare and Recreation</b> <i>(includes: entertainment, clubs, recreational lodging &amp; resorts, special interest activities, bowling, golf, restaurants, marinas, equip. rental, movie theaters, vehicle storage, kennels, etc.)</i>
<b>SGLI</b>	<b>Servicemembers Group Life Ins.</b>
<b>Project 112/SHAD</b>	<b>Shipboard Hazard And Defense</b>
<b>'Space-A'</b>	<b>Space Available</b>



The Power of Positive Mental "Altitude" ... I mean Attitude!

## 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"**



**DON'T FORGET – LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**  
[www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices](http://www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices)

or visit us online

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

**HOW COPY? OVER...**

**GOOD COPY! OUT!**

## TODAY'S SAFETY BRIEFING

- **DRIVE DEFENSIVELY BUT DRIVE SAFE!**
- **Don't TEXT 'N DRIVE!**
- **Use hands-free when on your cellular**
- **Practice situational awareness at all times!**  
*Know what's going on around you...*

Be safe out there! We want to see you next month...



## 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	<a href="http://www.marinecorpstimes.com">www.marinecorpstimes.com</a>
Air Force Times	<a href="http://www.airforcetimes.com">www.airforcetimes.com</a>
Military Times	<a href="http://www.militarytimes.com">www.militarytimes.com</a>
Military.COM	<a href="http://www.military.com">www.military.com</a>
SOFREP News	<a href="https://sofrep.com/news/">https://sofrep.com/news/</a>

### BENEFITS & OTHER INTERST

U.S. Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.va.gov">www.va.gov</a>
MN Dept. of Vet Affairs	<a href="https://mn.gov/mdva/">https://mn.gov/mdva/</a>
My Health-e Vet	<a href="http://www.myhealth.va.gov">www.myhealth.va.gov</a>

### SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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

### MILITARY SERVICE BRANCHES

US Army	<a href="http://www.goarmy.com">www.goarmy.com</a>
US Marine Corps	<a href="http://www.marines.mil">www.marines.mil</a>
US Navy	<a href="http://www.navy.mil">www.navy.mil</a>
US Air Force	<a href="http://www.airforce.com">www.airforce.com</a>
US Coast Guard	<a href="http://www.uscg.mil">www.uscg.mil</a>
National Guard (Army/Air)	<a href="http://www.nationalguard.com">www.nationalguard.com</a>

### OF INTEREST TO MILITARY RETIREES

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

### OTHER LINKS PROVIDING INFO AND ASSISTANCE

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

### VETERANS MALL, LODGING & VACATIONS

Armed Forces Exchange	<a href="http://www.aafes.gov">www.aafes.gov</a> *
Armed Forces Lodging	<a href="http://www.dodlodging.net/">www.dodlodging.net/</a> *
AF Vacation Club	<a href="http://www.afvclub.com">www.afvclub.com</a>

### VETERANS MALL, LODGING & VACATIONS

MN Ass'n of Vet Service Officers	<a href="http://www.macvso.org">www.macvso.org</a>
Nat'l Ass'n of Vet Service Officers	<a href="http://www.nacvso.org">www.nacvso.org</a>

## "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)

(Press "0" or your party's extension to interrupt message)

**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<sup>th</sup> FW, Sioux Falls, SD 605.988.5845  
1201 W. Algonquin St.  
196<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> St. Mon-Fri / 9am-3pm

**YOUR  
LOCAL  
CVSO IS:**

# 10 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EXPANDED COMMISSARY, EXCHANGE & MWR ACCESS

The Defense Department recently announced expanded commissary, military service exchange and MWR and established a standard for physical access to military installations. Below are the top 10 questions Veterans have asked the Defense Department about the expanded access. For more information on expanded access, call Military One Source at **1-800-342-9647**.

## **Q1. How do I get access if I have a 0 percent service-connected condition, but my income is too high to get a Veteran Health Identification Card?**

A1. Veterans who have received a Health Eligibility Center Form H623A that states they have been placed in VA health care priority group 8E may bring this form paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport for installation and privilege access.

## **Q2. If I've got a DoD-issued identification card because I'm retired, a Medal of Honor recipient, or have a 100 percent VA-documented disability or unemployability rating, do I also need to have a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) to get access to DoD privileges?**

A2. No. If you are eligible for a DoD-issued retiree, Medal of Honor, or 100 percent disabled identification card, you should obtain and use the DoD-issued card to access DoD installations and privileges. While you could use a VHIC if you had one, you would be subject to the commissary credit/debit card user fee if you paid for your commissary purchases with a commercial credit or debit card. The commissary credit/debit card user fee is not charged to DoD-issued identification card holders. Your DoD-issued identification card will also allow you broader morale, welfare, and recreation activity access.

## **Q3. How does the installation access process work for me and my guests; and if I have old felony activity on my record, will I be denied access to the installation?**

A3. All newly eligible Veterans and caregivers and any guests traveling with them who are age 18 or older must stop at the visitor control center before entering an installation for the first time to verify identify, establish purpose for the visit, and undergo a basic on-the-spot background check.

- *Newly eligible Veterans must show a Veteran Health Identification Card that displays "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED" below the photo on the front of the card; or a Health Eligibility Center Form H623A that states the Veteran has been placed in VA health care priority group 8E, paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport. (DoD installations cannot accept a driver's license that is not REAL ID-compliant as proof of identity.)*
- *Newly eligible caregivers must show an eligibility letter from the VA's Office of Community Care that lists them as the Primary Family Caregiver for an eligible Veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport. (DoD installations cannot accept a driver's license that is not REAL ID-compliant as proof of identity.)*
- *Guests of newly eligible Veterans or caregivers who are age 18 or older must show an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport. (DoD installations cannot accept a driver's license that is not REAL ID-compliant as proof of identity.)*

If the installation has credential enrollment capability and the acceptable credential(s) used are enrollable, they can be enrolled for recurring access so that the individual(s) don't have to stop at visitor control every time they want to visit the installation. Even a guest's acceptable credential can be enrolled. It will not allow them to enter the installation without someone who is eligible to enter the installation, but it will allow them to have their credential scanned from the car when entering with an authorized individual. This is the same process used for anyone who desires entry to an installation.

An individual may be denied access if derogatory information shows up on the background check that reflects on the integrity or character of an individual that indicates that such an individual may pose a risk to the good order, discipline, morale, or safety of a DoD installation or the resources or personnel on that installation. Examples include, but are not limited to, aspects of an individual's criminal history or current status as wanted or as a known or appropriately suspected terrorist. There is a process for an individual with accurately identified derogatory information that prevents individuals from establishing either historic or current fitness to seek an exception due to their specific circumstances, allowing them to be granted unescorted access. DoD Components may grant unescorted access to a convicted felon, in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws, after considering appropriate mitigating factors such as the nature and seriousness of the offense, the circumstances surrounding the offense, recency and frequency of the offense, the individual's age and maturity at the time of the offense, the individual's effort toward rehabilitation, and other factors. Under these conditions, an individual should apply directly to the installation commander requesting an exception to all allow access to the installation.

## **Q4. Are dependents of newly eligible Veterans and caregivers also eligible for DoD privileges?**

A4. No. The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, only gave these privileges to specific Veterans and caregivers, not to their dependents. Dependents may accompany eligible Veterans and caregivers as their guests, but they may not make purchases.

## **Q5. Why can't all Veterans have these DoD privileges?**

A5. The scope of operations on military installations is sized to take care of the needs of military members and their families. Military operations are not funded or sized to accommodate all Veterans. Expanding access to the 4.1 million Veterans and caregivers directed by the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (and that number continues to grow daily), will already be a test of DoD's capacity. Inserting another 15 million Veterans into the mix would overwhelm the system and our military members and their families would suffer for it.

## **Q6. Will Veterans who choose to live overseas be able to access military installations and privileges in overseas foreign countries?**

A6. It depends. U.S. law doesn't apply outside of the United States and outside of the U.S. territories and possessions. Access in overseas foreign countries is subject to applicable host-nation laws and applicable international agreements, like status of forces agreements. The function of the installation also sometimes restricts access. It is best to check with the installation you desire to visit to find out if, as a Veteran or caregiver in one of the new Veteran or caregiver categories, you will be authorized access. Chances are that if you are a retired military member living abroad and didn't already have access as a retiree, you will not get access under any of the new categories.

## **Q7. Can newly eligible Veterans and caregivers bring guests to the installations and facilities?**

A7. Yes. Guests will be subject to installation access procedures described in #8 above and must remain with the eligible Veteran or caregiver at all times when they are on the installation. Also, guests cannot make any purchases in commissary or exchange stores.



**Q8. Which of the following MWR activities can be used? (This is not an exhaustive list, only the most frequently asked about activities.)**

A8.

**AmericanForcesTravel.com:** Yes.  
**Bowling:** Yes.  
**Camping:** Yes. Tent sites and RV parks.  
**Child Care:** No.  
**Clubs:** Yes.  
**Golf:** Yes.  
**Gyms:** No.  
**Libraries:** No.

**MAC flights:** This is NOT an MWR, exchange, or commissary activity and access is NOT authorized.  
**Pharmacy:** This is NOT an MWR, exchange, or commissary activity and access is NOT authorized.  
**USO:** This is NOT a military organization. USO is a non-Federal entity.  
**Movies:** Yes, if there is an admission fee. (No, if the movies are shown at no charge.)  
**Pools:** At the discretion of the Military Department, subject to capacity and funding conditions.  
**Tickets:** At the discretion of the Military Department, subject to capacity and funding conditions  
**Rentals:** Yes.

**Lodging:** Yes. Cabins, cottages, recreation centers, resorts, and official temporary duty and permanent change of station lodging (on a space-available basis).

**Fishing:** **It depends.** If lakes are operated as part of the installation park and picnic areas, no. If lakes are operated as part of the installation outdoor recreation activity, then it is at the discretion of the Military Department, subject to capacity and funding conditions.

**Q9. What conditions are required to get access to the DoD privileges?**

A9. Newly eligible Veterans must meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Purple Heart recipient
- Former prisoner of war
- Service-connected disability rating (between 0-90 percent)

Veterans with a 100 percent disability or unemployability rating and Veterans who are Medal of Honor recipients already have DoD privileges, so they are not newly eligible.

Veterans include former members of any of the uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

Newly eligible caregivers must be the individual assessed, approved, and designated as the Primary Family Caregiver for an eligible Veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Only Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty on or after 9/11/2001 are eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. VA will begin expanding eligibility for the PCAFC in Summer of 2020.

In addition to meeting one of the above conditions, newly eligible Veterans and caregivers must possess the specific documentation that DoD will accept as proof of identity and eligibility for access:

- Veterans must possess a **Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)** that displays "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED" below the photo on the front of the card. If an eligible Veteran is not eligible to obtain a VHIC, the VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A indicating placement in VA health care priority group 8E, paired with an acceptable credential, like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or U.S. passport, will be accepted. For information on enrolling in VA health care, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll) or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. Eastern time.
- Caregivers must possess an eligibility letter from the VA Office of Community Care that lists them as the Primary Family Caregiver for an eligible Veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport.

**Q10. Can anyone with a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) get these privileges?**

A10. No. Only Veterans with a VHIC that displays "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED" will be authorized the new privileges. Veterans may be able to use a VHIC that doesn't contain one of these markings to access an installation with a medical facility if they have an appointment there, but if the VHIC does not display "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED," they will not have access to commissaries, exchanges, or morale, welfare, and recreation facilities.

Download the Expanded Access at Commissaries, Exchanges and Recreation Facilities fact sheet at <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/expanding-access-fact-sheet.pdf>

**NOTICE! VA HOME CARE FUNDING CUT!**

We have just been notified that VA has updated its reimbursement model for home health service (i.e. homemaker and home health-aid services) offered in the community via VA contract. Each state has a different reimbursement model, here in MN it looks like a significant reduction. It appears cuts are 60-64% depending on which MN catchment area you fall.

At this time I have no information from the South Dakota people as we fall in the Sioux Falls catchment area.

The National Office is now aware and will be working with VA Leadership to gather more information on the changes and, if necessary, meet with our members of congress on the Hill.

I'm sure more information will be forthcoming! Keep an eye out for it!



**LATE ARRIVING NEWS!**