



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 1

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

January 2020

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.

IT'S A NEW YEAR! *For Auld Lang Syne*

Jeffrey L. Gay, CVSO

Hello All and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Another year has passed and a new one is beginning. We all want to make better what we do and how we do it, and in some cases quit doing what isn't working! These are called resolutions...

Many people think that they're made to be broken. I consider them to be a personal inventory of my future, choosing the goals I want to set for myself both personally and professionally, and how I want to be better as I go forward. Yeah, OK, I've broken them too but not the really important ones just the ones that aren't fun!

Looking back at my year and a half being in this position I will admit that I have stumbled a little but each time that occurred I learned from it. Even yet, every day is a learning experience, if it weren't we would never excel at what we do. I look forward to 2020 enhancing the services I currently provide and creating more as the needs and opportunities arise.

Every community population is comprised of Veterans, youth, elderly, manufacturing/business, indigenous & non-indigenous people, etc. Each of these are communities of their own which comprise the nucleus of the entire community. They each have their unique needs and desires and often times seem like they are alone. One area I wish to address this year is bringing all of these "communities" together to work in unison increasing awareness, communication and expanding our local human network.

Individually "we are who we are", together, however, we are a force to be reckoned with! By combining "forces" we can ensure that we are heard so that resources we need are available for all of us.

With that said, I look forward to working with all of you and your families in 2020. Please call me any time to talk or for an appointment. I can do limited evening and weekend appointments if you need. My numbers are 507.847.4774 or personal cellular at 507.530.8378.

Proud member of



MN and National Associations of Veteran Service Officers



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

OFFICE INFORMATION

The Jackson County Veterans Service Office is located at:

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

CVSO@co.jackson.mn.us

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

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

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

SPECIAL DAYS

January is: National Bath Safety Month and
National Blood Donor Month

- 1 – **New Year's Day!** (A.K.A. National Hangover Day)
- 6 – **Jackson VSO "Traveling Office" at Lakefield, MN**
- 12 – National Pharmacist's Appreciation Day
- 20 – **Martin Luther King's Birthday!**
- 26 – **Spouses Day** (Do something nice for your spouse!)
- 28 – **Fun at Work Day** (Whatever...)



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 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...

BLUE WATER VET CLAIMS SET TO GO!!!

Reprinted form VA Blog

Did you serve in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam **between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975?** If so, then you're considered a Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veteran.

On Jan. 1, 2020, the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 goes into effect. This Act was signed into law on Jun. 25, and extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, such as Agent Orange, to BWN Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles from the shore of Vietnam and have since developed one of fourteen conditions (See www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/related-diseases/) related to exposure. Some of these conditions include Type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, many forms of cancer and others. You may now be eligible for disability compensation and other benefits. In addition, if you're a Veteran who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between Sept. 1, 1967, and Aug. 31, 1971, you

may also qualify for compensation and benefits for yourself and your family members.

How do I know if I'm eligible?

The best way to find out if you're eligible is to work with an accredited claims representative or Veterans Affairs (VA) regional office to understand eligibility requirements before filing a claim. You don't need to prove contact with herbicides to be eligible.

How do I file a claim for compensation benefits?

You can file an initial claim (that has not been previously decided by VA), by submitting Form **21-526EZ**, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits.

You can also contact an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO) to assist you with your application. To access a list of VA-approved VSO's go online to www.macvso.org. You may also contact your **Veterans Service Officer** should you need additional assistance with the application process.

What if I've previously filed a claim that was denied?

VA will be using the new law to automatically review claims that are currently with the VA review process or under appeal. However, if you had an herbicide exposure claim with one or more presumptive conditions denied in the past, you are urged to file a new claim.

When you begin the claims process, be sure to provide or identify any new and relevant information regarding your claim, such as the dates the vessel you were serving on traveled through the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam or updated medical information.

Submit a VA Form **20-0995**, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim.

How should survivors and dependents apply for initial Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Claim for a Veteran who died of presumptive condition?

Eligible survivors and dependents must meet certain conditions to receive. If found to be eligible, there are several ways to file a claim, including:

- By mail, using [VA Form 21P-534EZ](http://www.va.gov/forms/21P-534EZ).
- In person at a VA regional office.
- An accredited claims representative or VSO.

What benefits will I receive if my claim is approved?

If you are deemed eligible, you may receive a monthly disability compensation payment and free healthcare related to your disability. The amount of compensation you may receive is determined by your diagnosed condition and level of disability.

Another important component of the Blue Water Navy Act includes changes to the VA Home Loan program. VA now allows the no-down payment option on guaranteed

Jackson County Veteran Service Office January 2020

home loans, regardless of mortgage amount for ALL Veterans. In addition, there is a reduction in the funding fee required for Reservists and National Guard borrowers and other changes.

More information and resources on the Blue Water Navy Act, eligibility, how to file a claim, and changes to the VA Home Loan Program can be found online at <https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/blue-water-navy.asp>

For the full blog and hot links please go online to <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/69370/blue-water-navy-veterans-disability-claims-now-decided/>

CENSUS JOBS

Are you looking to do something temporarily to put a few extra shekles in your pockets, jing in your jeans and some presidents in your wallet?



Well, its soon to be 2020 and with the passing of the decade comes the need for people to begin “counting noses” in America... It’s a census year!

If this interests you or someone you know check it out on-line at <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html> and or go ahead and apply on-line!

CAREGIVERS AND PX PRIVILEGE

Eligible caregivers will receive an eligibility letter from VA’s Office of Community Care.

If you are a primary family caregiver under the PCAFC and lose your eligibility letter, please call 1-877-733-7927 to request a replacement. Please allow two weeks for processing.

For installation access, entry to some commissary stores and at point of sale at commissaries, exchanges, and MWR retail facilities, eligible caregivers will need to show an acceptable credential along with their eligibility letter. Acceptable credentials may include:

- DoD common access card (CAC) (when otherwise eligible)
- DoD uniformed services identification card (when otherwise eligible)
- REAL ID-compliant driver’s license issued by a State, territory, possession, or the District of Columbia
- REAL ID-compliant non-driver’s identification card issued by a State, territory, possession, or the District of Columbia
- Enhanced driver’s license issued by a State, territory, possession, or the District of Columbia
- U.S. passport or passport card
- Foreign passport bearing an unexpired immigrant or non-immigrant visa or entry stamp
- Federal personal identity verification card (when otherwise eligible)
- VHIC
- Transportation Worker Identification Card

AGCO – TAKIN’ CARE OF BUSINESS!

Jeffrey L. Gay, CVSO

AGCO has a long history in Jackson building not only agri-equipment but also community building. In doing so they take care of their employees and honor their Vets!

Jackson, MN - On 6 December 2019, AGCO of Jackson was presented the ESGR (*Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve*) Patriotic Employer Award at their annual employee holiday dinner and meeting. AGCO is the world’s largest manufacturer of machinery and equipment focused solely on the agricultural industry. In attendance were 1000+ employees and company executive staff.

AGCO Jackson Operations and Ms. Jodi Johnson were nominated for the award for the extraordinary care provided PFC Donovan Bruns of the 492d Engineer Company, USAR, during his current overseas deployment. Part of his nomination letter stated “AGCO Corporation has been very supportive while I’m on deployment.” Some of what they have done is to send “care packages”, stay personally in touch, providing ongoing benefits and paying bonuses. Ms. Johnson has been in contact with him on a nearly daily basis since he left.

At one point during the ceremony the camera was panned across the crowd of employees filming them all waving to PFC Bruns and cheering. This clip was sent to him via e-mail overseas. All military Veteran employees were also asked to stand and be recognized as were families of Veterans and those still serving.

Presenting the award was Jeffrey Gay, ESGR Region 5 Chair and County Veteran Service Officer and, on behalf of PFC Bruns, US Navy Chief ADC Bradley Dick (*in full uniform*), military retiree and who also is employed by AGCO. Accepting the award were Eric and Ms. Jodi Johnson.

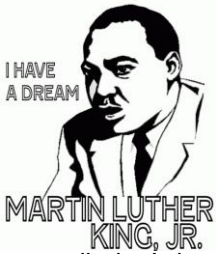


Pictured from L to R: Jeff Gay, ESGR & CVSO; Eric Fisher, AGCO Director of Operations; Bradley Pagel American Legion; Jodi Johnson, AGCO HR Representative; James H. Siefken, American Legion; ADC Bradley Dick, AGCO. Pictured in the background pictured is PFC Bruns.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR

Martin Luther King Jr. (January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968) was an American Christian minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the Civil Rights Movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, King is best known for advancing civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi. For more interesting facts you can go online and visit https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King_Jr.

King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.



Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a holiday in numerous cities and states beginning in 1971; the holiday was enacted at the federal level by legislation signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1986.

His “I have a dream...” speech is one of his most poignant and the most recalled. It begins, “I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream... I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.’” There’s more and you can read and/or hear it at the Internet link above.

We celebrate his life and accomplishments each January. This year it is January 20th. Mr. King is one of the more famous characters in our recent history and his desires not only benefitted the colored population of America it benefitted ALL of America.

I (WE ALL) HAVE A DREAM!

QUILTS OF VALOR FOUNDATION

Martha “Marti” Rouby, Little Rock VAMC

The “Quilts of Valor Foundation” (www.qovf.org) is a national organization founded in 2003 by “Blue Star” mom

Catherine Roberts. With a son deployed in Iraq – a gunner sitting atop a Humvee – she felt ten seconds away from panic 24-hours a day, every day. It was during that time her son was deployed that she

had the idea of comforting Veterans with quilts.

Since then, more than 140,000 quilts have been awarded here in the United States, and in Germany, Iraq and Afghanistan. With each quilt, the mission to honor Servicemembers and Veterans is fulfilled — one human being reaching out and touching another, without

judgement, reaching out with acceptance and with an acknowledgment of service to our nation in very trying circumstances. The Quilts of Valor Foundation recognizes and acknowledges the “war demons” that plague soldiers from all wars. Thousands of quilters all over the US work daily to create quilts to cover warriors from all conflicts, including WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.



A Quilt of Valor is made of three layers and each layer has own special meaning:

- *The top with its many colors, shapes and fabrics represents the communities and the many individuals we are.*
- *The batting, the filler, is the center of the quilt, its warmth. It represents our hope that this quilt will bring warmth, comfort, peace and healing to the individual who receives it.*
- *The backing is the strength that supports the other layers. It represents the strength of the recipient, the support of his or her family, our communities, and our nation.*
- *Each stitch that holds the layers together represents love, gratitude, and sometimes the tears of the maker.*

Each quilt also represents a three-part message from the givers to those receiving:

- *First, we HONOR you for your service. We honor you for leaving all you hold dear and to stand in harm’s way in a time of crisis, protecting us from the effects of war.*
- *Next, we know that FREEDOM IS NOT FREE. The cost of freedom is the dedication of lives of men and women like you, and this quilt is meant to say thank you for your sacrifice.*
- *And finally, this quilt is meant to offer COMFORT to you, and to remind you that although your family and friends cannot be with you at all times, you are forever in our thoughts and our hearts.*

This week, at the Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care System in Little Rock, U.S. Air Force Veteran Robert Campbell received the 500th quilt presented at the facility since 2008.

SPOTLIGHT: HOW TO AVOID PRESCRIPTION REFILL MISTAKES

“In the Spotlight” from the VA HealthVET

Millions of Veterans manage their VA prescription refills with My HealthVet. If you’re one of them, it’s okay if you’ve gotten confused a time or two. Better navigate the pharmacy section of your account by avoiding these common hiccups.

What is the fill date?

When you visit the Refill VA Prescriptions section under **Pharmacy**, you will find a table of your prescription

Jackson County Veteran Service Office January 2020

medications. This table's column titles can leave you wondering, "what's that?" The most common section Veterans ask about is the **Fill Date**. My HealthVet automatically updates this date once a refill request has been submitted. It refers to the date after which the VA Pharmacy processes the refill request. This means your prescriptions will not be filled until the **Fill Date**. Your refill requests should be made at least ten days before running out of your prescription.

How far back can I track?

Once you submit a VA prescription refill online, tracking information is available a day or two after the VA Mail Order Pharmacy refills it. Refills shipped from a local VA medical center cannot be tracked at this time. After your refill has been mailed, a blue "Track Delivery" button will appear in the **VA Prescription Tracking** column. Click this button to view your delivery status. Your shipment information will be available for 30 days. Generally, you can expect to receive your prescriptions 3 to 5 days after they are shipped.

You can also receive email notifications of when your prescription refills are shipped. Go to the **Personal Information** section in the navigation bar and select **My Profile**. There you can opt-in to receive **Rx Refill Shipment Notifications**.

Refill Status	Refill Submit Date	Fill Date	Refill Remaining	Medication Name	Facility	Select to Refill	VA Prescription Tracking
Active	07/20/2018	07/22/2018	2	HYDROCORTISONE 1/ODOQUINOL 1% CREAM RX# _____ APPLY SMALL AMOUNT TOPICALLY TWICE A DAY	Clarksburg WV VAMC	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Are these all my prescriptions?

Most of your prescriptions are available in the **Refill VA Prescriptions** section of **Pharmacy**. Yet, it's possible that not all your medications are listed.

If you have **refillable prescriptions** that are not shown, contact the pharmacy staff at the VA facility that prescribed your medication. You can find the phone number on the label of your prescription bottle.

Renewal or refill?

The number of refills you have for each VA prescription can be found in the **Refill Remaining** column of your medications table. If your prescription is not available for a refill at this time, you will see an "i" image in that column. If you have questions about this prescription, please contact your local VA pharmacy.

If you have **no refills left** but are still expected to continue taking the medication, then you should contact your health care team to request a medication 'renewal.' This also applies to prescriptions that are expired or discontinued. You can ask for a prescription renewal by phone, at your next VA health care appointment, or with **Secure Messaging** (sign in required).

Upgrade to Premium

If you are a VA patient and want to refill your VA prescriptions online, you need either an Advanced or Premium MyHealthVet account. You can **upgrade your account** by:

- *Signing in with your DS Logon Premium User ID and Password*
- *Getting authenticated in person at a VA facility*

HELPING US HELP YOURSELF

CVSO's do NOT have all the answers! They can get them but only with your help... It seems that so many people think we have a magic wand, access to Zoltar or ask the question and turn the "8-Ball" over. We don't!

For a new or subsequent claim we do not have the information at our fingertips, we rely on information you provide us along with any evidence or back-up documentation you might have.

A quick reminder. The process is essentially this:

- **You provide what you believe is documentation to prove an "In-Service" event.**
- **We then work together to gather more information as proof as to what that event has progressed to.**
- **The VSO will then work to fit the two together forming what is called a "NEXUS".**



Without that Nexus the people who read the claim in order to make a decision are not able to, and therefore the claim is returned for additional information or it is simply denied.

The best thing a Veteran can do is to gather up all their military paperwork they've been saving for a rainy day or posterity and assemble it in semblance of order. I placed mine in a three-ring binder in page protectors and in chronological order. It makes finding something a whole lot easier.



Support documentation you will need includes, but is not limited to, a statement (*from you, your family, buddies or from someone you served with who can corroborate your story*), MD's charts/statements, military medical records, etc.

The more we have our proverbial ducks in a row the better chance the claim will slide through with minimal issues. But we must keep in mind that claims are not processed overnight by the VA, it can take several weeks/months to hear back.

VERY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER! Any time you go to an ER that is not VA **you must contact the VA within 72 hours of entering the ER.**

While in the military, regardless of branch, we generally find a type of quick-witted humor we may previously not had. Usually there were chuckles all around and other times, well, it resulted in the butt chewing of all time! Some people just can't take a joke... Here's a story from a Navy Veteran...

"As the Captain approached he rang the bell and passed the words "Pigeon, Arriving!" as the Captain stepped onto the quarterdeck.

Tim snatched off his ball cap and flapped it violently next to the microphone. It sounded exactly like a bird flapping it's wings."

BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS

From the Federal VA - Dec. 12, 2019

Law also affects survivors of Veterans, certain dependents and Veteran homebuyers

WASHINGTON

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) begins deciding Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 claims, Jan. 1, 2020, extending the presumption of herbicide exposure that include toxins such as Agent Orange, to Veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Prior to the measure, only Vietnam War Veterans who served on the ground in Vietnam or within Vietnam's inland waterways were eligible to receive disability compensation and other benefits based on a presumption of herbicide exposure.

Signed into law June 25, the law specifically affects Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 6, 1962 and May 7, 1975, as well as Veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between Jan. 1, 1967 and Aug. 31, 1971. These Veterans can apply for disability compensation and other benefits if they have since developed one of 14 conditions that are presumed to be related to exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange. Veterans do not need to prove that they were exposed to herbicides. The specific conditions can be found by searching Agent Orange on www.va.gov.

"For six months VA worked diligently to gather and digitize records from the Naval History and Heritage Command in order to support faster claims decisions," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. *"These efforts will positively impact the claims process for Veterans filing for these benefits"*

Qualifying recipients, in addition to affected Veterans still living, are certain survivors of deceased BWN and Korean DMZ Veterans.

Survivors can file claims for benefits based on the Veteran's service if the Veteran died from at least one of the 14 presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange. The law also provides benefits for children born with spina bifida if their parent is or was a Veteran with certain verified service in Thailand during a specific period. The Blue Water Navy Act also includes provisions affecting the VA Home Loan Program. The law creates more access for Veterans to obtain no-down payment home loans, regardless of loan amount, and the home loan funding fee is reduced for eligible Reservists and National Guard borrowers who use their home loan benefits for the first time. Certain Purple Heart recipients do not pay a funding fee at all. VA's website describes these and other benefits.

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for an herbicide-related disability can use VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits or work with a VA-recognized Veterans Service Organization to assist with the application process. Veterans may also contact their state Veterans Affairs Office.

BWN Veterans who previously filed a claim seeking service connection for one of the 14 presumptive conditions that was denied by VA may provide or identify any new and relevant information regarding their claim when reapplying. To re-apply, Veterans may use VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim. As a result of the new law, VA will automatically review claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal.

For more information about the Blue Water Navy Act and the changes that will take effect visit: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/blue-water-navy.asp>.

Jackson County Veteran Service Office January 2020

SPOTLIGHT: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR STRESS

"In the Spotlight" from the VA HealthVET

Manage everyday stress with these tips and the help of smartphone apps.

Between juggling work, family, and other commitments, it's normal to feel **stressed** sometimes. No matter the level of stress you feel, learning to manage it can help you live a more peaceful and healthier life. Managing your stress takes practice, but you can do it.

Here are a few ways to help you take better control of stressful situations.

Find the causes of your stress

Things that bring you stress are called **stressors**. They can be everyday events, life changes, or a combination of things. Figuring out what causes you stress can be tough to pinpoint.

Once you learn what's causing your stress, you can develop a plan for dealing with your stressors.



The **Mindfulness Coach** app can help you notice and pay attention to what's happening in the present moment. By being more aware, you can reduce stress and

improve your emotions.

Know the signs

Step one of handling stress is knowing how you **respond** to it. Some common responses are:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased alcohol and other substance use
- Being easily angered
- Feeling depressed
- Low energy

Sometimes we don't even realize how our actions may change when we are stressed. That's why it's a good idea to start using a **stress tracker**. This is a great tool to see what patterns you may have or how you typically respond to stress.

Stay connected and social

Don't let stress keep you away from the people you enjoy or the activities you love. For many people, life's demands begin to replace pleasant activities. It's good to have balance in your life, so you don't start to feel overwhelmed.

The **Moving Forward** app can help you manage challenges in your life. It gives on-the-go tools and teaches problem-solving skills to overcome obstacles.

Talk to your doctor

It can be hard to admit when you're feeling stressed. But if you're uncomfortable, let your doctor know. You can start the conversation for new or existing problems. Sign in today and use **Secure Messaging** to talk to your doctor about your stress.

A USCG Master Chief Petty Officer was turning a corner on post, nearly tackling the Post Commander (2-star). He snapped to attention and saluted about 3" from the Commander's face and screamed, "HOLY SH%%, SIR!!" (I guess it just came out born of surprise...)

TRAUMA AND YOU!

By Jeffrey L. Gay

You may have experienced trauma at some time or multiple times and never realized it. Trauma comes in many forms.

For instance when you hear PTSD you are more likely than not to think of a Servicemember. Because of combat PTSD is presumed to ensue but everybody, whether they serve in the military or not, are susceptible to the effects of PTSD.

Many law enforcement, EMS, firefighters, emergency room personnel are all subject to suffering PTSD on one level or another. So are people who have been in a fire or accident or been witness to one.

This is treatable but only once it's been diagnosed and it's up to you to take that first step. Explore the symptoms and then do a self-check to see if you display any of them. If you do go see a doctor.

Following a traumatic event, it will take time to "heal". Many times you may never completely heal but you are able to at least cope with it better.

Treatment includes an ongoing self-awareness and examination and learning the coping skills as well as the triggers which may set off an episode.

A couple of things that can help you are, of course, learn what to look for, the symptoms, educate yourself and those close to you. If you are aware of a symptom, practice self-relaxation methods that work for you. You can usually be trained in these from your doctor.

One thing that should be easy to do can be one of the most difficult, that's to ask for help, to reach out. Have a "go to" person you trust who can help you do what's needed to include getting to a doctor.

A couple of websites to help you learn more about trauma and PTSD to include awareness and treatment are www.ptsd.va.gov/understand_tx/tx_basics.asp or www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/decisionaid/

AUTHORIZING TO HAVE SOMEONE ACT AS PROXY TO CONTACT MEDICARE FOR YOU

Would you like for a family member or caregiver to be able to call Medicare on your behalf? Medicare can't give your personal health information to anyone unless we have permission in writing first. There are 2 ways to give permission:

Jackson County Veteran Service Office January 2020

(1) Print and fill out form CMS-10106: "Authorization to Disclose Personal Health Information" and then mail it to us.

OR

(2) Submit the form online with a Medicare account.

Don't have a Medicare account yet? Signing up (go online to <https://mymedicare.gov>) is easy and gives you electronic access to your health information. Once you've signed up, **fill out and submit the form online by following these steps:**

1. Click on your name in the top right corner of the page.
2. Click "My account."
3. Select "Manage my representatives."
4. Click "Medicare Authorization to Disclose Personal Health Information form."
5. Enter the requested information and click the "Continue" button.

How can I change my VA direct deposit information online?

Disability compensation and pension benefit payments

If you receive disability compensation or pension payments from VA, you can update your direct deposit information in your VA.gov profile. You'll need your bank's routing number and account number to make the updates.



Note: You'll need to sign in to VA.gov to update your direct deposit information. Once signed in, you'll have to verify your identity and set up 2-factor authentication only if you've haven't done this already.

Please sign in to change your direct deposit information online

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.

Sign in or create an account

If you have questions, please call us at 800-827-1000. We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET. Or go to your nearest VA regional office.

Education benefits

If you receive education benefit payments from VA, you'll need to sign in to eBenefits to update your direct deposit information. You'll need your bank's routing number and account number to make the updates.

How else can I update my VA payment information?

To cancel paper checks and start direct deposit

You can cancel paper checks from your VA.gov profile and opt in to receive your compensation payments through direct deposit. If you don't want to do this from your profile, you can:

- Call us at 800-827-1000 (TTY: 800-829-4833), **or**
- Go to your nearest VA regional office and change this information in person, **or**
- Fill out a VA Direct Deposit Enrollment (VA Form 24-0296)

To cancel direct deposit and switch to paper checks or to update the address on your paper checks

To update this information, you can:

- Call us at 800-827-1000 (TTY: 800-829-4833), **or**
- Go to your nearest VA regional office and change this information in person, **or**
- Fill out a VA Request for Change of Address or Cancellation of Direct Deposit (VA Form 20-572)

<https://www.va.gov/change-direct-deposit/>

WHAT A CVSO CAN DO FOR YOU

MNDVA Article Reprint

December 17, 2019 -- **There are many benefits** available to Veterans, yet many are unaware of all the different benefits they may be eligible for. This is



where County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) can help. Minnesota Association of CVSO's (MACVSO) President Greg Peterson says, "There are many authorities in a variety of Veterans Benefits throughout Minnesota and beyond, but the truly single expert for all benefits lies with the County Veterans Service Officer. These men and women are both customers and advocates in one person. The CVSOs empathy for ensuring that each Veteran, dependent, and survivor receives all of the benefits for which they are entitled is unmatched in any other profession."

The CVSO position was created towards the end of WWII in 1945, when Minnesota realized that there would be a sudden influx of American servicemen and servicewomen returning from the war who would need assistance with the benefits they had earned. Each county in Minnesota was appointed at least one Veteran to serve in this new CVSO position. To this day, every CVSO is also a Veteran.

The National CVSO Association began in 1991, and CVSOs across the country continue to help connect Veterans with benefits they are eligible for. Along with helping Veterans, dependents, and survivors access benefits such as healthcare, the GI Bill and the Post 9/11 GI Bill, CVSOs are also able to connect Veterans with nonprofit organizations. Last year in Minnesota, CVSOs were able to connect a Veteran with the Disabled Veterans Donor Connect program and he was able to receive a van to help transport his family. CVSOs were also able to connect another Veteran with Bryant's

Jackson County Veteran Service Office January 2020

Community Heroes Program where she received a new Bryant furnace to heat her home.

To learn more about CVSOs and to contact your local CVSO, visit the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers at www.macvso.org.

Daddy is Going to War - True Story

During the Persian Gulf War, I was assigned to go to Saudi Arabia. As I was saying good-bye to my family, my three-year-old son, Christopher, was holding on to my leg and pleading with me not to leave. **"No, Daddy, please don't go!"** he kept repeating.

We were beginning to make a scene when my wife, desperate to calm him, said, **"Let Daddy go and I'll take you to get a pizza."**

Immediately, Christopher loosened his death grip, stepped back and in a calm voice said, **"Bye, Daddy."**

it is more affordable than no dental insurance and it would presumably cover the entire family.

The VA stated that they spent in excess of \$1.1 billion offering dental care to veterans in 2018 under the existing rules.

What happened when the soldier went into an enemy bar? He got bombed.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

LIFETIME ACCESS PASS

Spring flowers are blooming, the summer travel season quickly approaches and Veterans are joining the 330-million yearly visitors enjoying U.S. National Parks.

Many Veterans, with a service connected disability rating, are entering Federal recreation lands and national parks for free with an America the Beautiful-the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands lifetime Access Pass through an interagency partnership between the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. Good for entry into thousands of federally managed recreation sites across the country, the Lifetime Access Pass is another way a grateful nation says thank you for the service and sacrifices of U. S. Veterans with disabilities.

The Access Pass admits the pass owner and any passengers in a single, private vehicle (non-commercial) at per-vehicle entrance and day use fee areas; or, the pass owner plus three additional adults where per-person fees are charged. In addition to free entry at participating sites, the Access Pass includes discounts on some expanded amenity fees such as camping. Sites recommend that pass owners check with each site before visiting for details about Access Pass entry and discounts.

Veterans who have been medically determined to have a disability are eligible for the Lifetime Access Pass—with three options for obtaining the pass:

First, Veterans with disability documentation can order the Access Pass online for a \$10 processing fee which includes standard shipping. Documentation required includes:

- *Proof of residency*
- *VA disability award letter, VA summary of benefits, or proof of SSDI income*

Second, the Interagency Access Pass may be obtained through the mail. Download a paper application from <https://store.usgs.gov/access-pass>. Follow the instructions on the website and pay the document processing fee of \$10. Once the application package is received by USGS, the documentation will be verified and a pass imprinted with the pass owner's name will be mailed to the applicant.

NEWS YOU CAN SINK YOUR TEETH INTO!

There are many inquiries as to dental assistance through the VA. The short answer is "NO". As you guessed, there is a long answer too.



The VA does offer dental assistance, FREE or discounted at a local provider or with the VA dentist. There are restrictions, however. These include treatment for veterans who have a service-related dental problem, are former POWs or are rated as totally disabled as a result of their military service.

There has been a breakthrough though but it too is limited both in eligibility and restrictions I'll get to later. This plan is referred to as VADIP or the VA Dental Insurance Program. however, it is scheduled to end in 2021 and is only available to veterans enrolled in TRICARE, VA healthcare or families enrolled in CHAMPVA.



According to a published notice the VA has expressed interest in beginning a pilot program, lasting at least five years, which would connect veterans with dentists in their home area offering free or discounted dental care to all veterans. This expands the existing eligibility program greatly but the plan still has limits!

With VADIP there are several nationwide dental insurance providers you can choose from. The website provides a great comparison guide to help you make your decision. Presumably dental work would be coordinated through the VA but it would allow a more cost effective means of procuring dental service.

Overall it would provide increased convenience as you would utilize local dentists with a cost savings through the insurance you choose. As I look at this it isn't FREE but

Passes ordered online or through the mail will be delivered 3 to 4 weeks after receipt of documentation and processing payment.

A third option is for disabled Veterans to visit a participating federal recreation site where interagency passes are issued, present photo identification (e.g., Driver's license, State ID, birth certificate, Passport, or permanent resident card), provide documentation of permanent disability, or read and sign a Statement of Permanent Disability affidavit. That's It. The Pass is free and issued at the time of entry.

Make sure to have photo ID available when using your Lifetime Access Pass and enjoy the majestic scenery and abundant recreational opportunities our National Parks provide.

COMBAT EXPERIENCE TRANSCENDS GENERATIONS

Nick Collier spent one month as the artist in residence at Gettysburg National Military Park. During his time at the park, he used photography and sculpture to capture the significance of the historic site. The events that occurred on the battlefield at Gettysburg resonated with the Marine Corps Veteran, and that came through in his artwork.

Collier served in the Marine Corps as an 0311 Infantryman from 2002 to 2006. One afternoon, while on patrol in Afghanistan, Collier met someone using a "box camera." The man was using the box camera as a small business. He would make a little money taking people's photos using the self-created contraption. Collier was intrigued and had his picture taken with the unique camera.

Years later, after separating from the military, Collier decided to build his own box camera. It is made of 3 inch oak and sits atop a surveyor's tripod. It serves as its own traveling dark room and exposes the image directly onto paper. He calls it a "pinhole Polaroid." The shutter is the front cap that is removed to expose, and there are two trays inside the box that give the photos the chemical washes they need. Then, he can remove the photo from the back of the box.

He uses the box camera for a number of things, but at national parks, he has used it to take portraits of park employees who are military Veterans.

Collier's participation as Artist in Residence is part of Gettysburg's Veterans outreach program. The park has a new artist each month, and they feature at least three Veterans each year.

"We've always used art and we've always had Veterans use art to tell the story of the battle," said Chris Gwinn, Gettysburg's chief of interpretation and education. Collier has worked in a similar program at Big Bend National Park, Texas.

"The program is unique because I don't think there are a lot of opportunities specifically like this for Veterans that

are artists," said Collier. "I think its special that national parks would take a step in that direction."

VA also embraces Veterans expression through art. There are currently 10 artists whose work is on display at VA medical centers across the country.

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

Annual Veterans Suicide Awareness Day is held annually the first Saturday in October

NATIONAL PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE

1-800-522-4700



OR TEXT TO "838255"



DON'T FORGET – LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices

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

HOW COPY? OVER...

GOOD COPY! OUT!



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!

FIND A LOCAL CVSO

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

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://yva.org/>
Military Order of Purple heart <https://moph.org>

MILITARY SERVICE BRANCHES

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

OF INTEREST TO MILITARY RETIREES

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

OTHER LINKS PROVIDING INFO AND ASSISTANCE

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

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)

"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)

VA 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

114th FW (Airport), Sioux Falls, SD 605.988.5845
1201 W. Algonquin St.

196th MEB, Sioux Falls, SD 605.357.2900 or
800 W. National Guard Drive 2985

NG Armory, Montevideo, MN 320.269.9284 or
711 S. 17th St. 5180
Mon-Fri / 9am-3pm

YOUR
LOCAL
CVSO IS: