



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

# VICTOR SIERRA OSCAR COMMO CHECK!

Vol 2 Number 6

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

July 2019

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

Proud member of



MN and National Associations of Veteran Service Officers



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

## OFFICE INFORMATION

The Jackson County Veterans Service Office is located at:

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

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

[www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans](http://www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans)  
You can find us on FaceBook too

## INDEPENDENCE DAY!

July fourth marks a very important day for our nation and those who live here. In 1775, people in New England began fighting the British for their independence. On July 2, 1776, the Congress secretly voted for independence from Great Britain. Two days later, on July 4, 1776, the final wording of the Declaration of Independence was approved, and the document was published. The first public reading of the Declaration of Independence was on July 8, 1776. Delegates began to sign the Declaration of Independence on August 2, 1776. In 1870, Independence Day was made an unpaid holiday for federal employees. In 1941, it became a paid holiday for them. The term "Independence Day" was not used until 1791.



Due to this Holiday there are many public events, parades, shows and fireworks displays. This may cause local disruption to traffic. Public transit systems do not usually operate on their regular timetables. **Please take care when travelling over this holiday, watch for pedestrians, slow drivers or those who may be otherwise incapacitated.**

This is yet another good time to remember and thank those who fought for our independence and those who guard it for all of us. **Freedom isn't free! FLY YOUR FLAG PROUDLY!**

## TOMB OF THE THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

On March 4, 1921, the United States Congress approved the burial of an unidentified American serviceman from World War I in the plaza of the new Memorial Amphitheater. On November 11, 1921, the unknown soldier brought back from France was interred below a three-level marble tomb. The bottom two levels are six marble sections each and the top at least nine blocks with a rectangular opening in the center of each level through which the unknown remains were placed through the tomb and into the ground below. A stone, rather than marble, slab covers the rectangular opening.

Inscribed on the West panel is:

"HERE RESTS IN HONORED GLORY AN AMERICAN SOLDIER KNOWN BUT TO GOD"



**DID YOU KJNOW?** The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery has been constantly guarded for more than 80 years. On July 2, 1937, approval was granted for 24-hour guarding of the tomb. The change came following efforts from the American Legion for nonstop oversight. For more go to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb\\_of\\_the\\_Unknown\\_Soldier\\_\(Arlington\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb_of_the_Unknown_Soldier_(Arlington))

Jackson County Veteran Service Office July 2019

## SPECIAL DAYS

### July is: NATIONAL HOT DOG MONTH!

- 1 – National Postal Workers Day
- 4 – INDEPENDENCE DAY
- 11 – World Population Day
- 16-18 – CVSO out of Office (Training)
- 17 – National Hot Dog Day
- 20 – Moon Day (1<sup>st</sup> Man on Moon)
- 23-27 – Jackson County Fair
- 27 – Above/Under Water Fishing Contest
- 27 – Korean War Armistice Day
- 30 – International Day of Friendship



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!



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.

## ABOVE WATER & UNDER WATER FISHING CONTEST

Yep! You're hearing right! It's an above and under water fishing contest for our Disabled Veterans Restoration thru Recreation Scubas. This is the first of its kind in our area.

For complete Rules and Information, including Registration and Required Releases please click here ([www.dvrtrscuba.org/files/docs/Registration-info-Contest-Rules.pdf](http://www.dvrtrscuba.org/files/docs/Registration-info-Contest-Rules.pdf)) and download the printable PDF document.



*\*Please note... You will not be able to participate without all appropriate forms filled out and signed. All proceeds go to support Disabled Veterans Restoration thru Recreation Scuba Therapy program therefore no refunds will be available*

**Lodging -- Rooms are filling fast** so if you are coming from a distance and need lodging PLEASE make your reservations early.

**Address**  
307 3rd St, Ironton  
MN 56455, United States

**Telephone**  
952.393.1358  
**Email**  
[dvrtrscuba@gmail.com](mailto:dvrtrscuba@gmail.com)

Join us and help support our disabled veterans!



2019 INAUGURAL

July 27, 2019

Mark your calendars to join us for a fun-filled Saturday!

In conjunction with Minnesota Warriors Hockey ...a USA hockey team!

All proceeds help a 501(c)(3) non-profit scuba therapy program

WWW.DVRTRSCUBA.ORG



Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area  
307 3rd Street  
Ironton, MN 56455

Disabled Veterans Restoration THROUGH Recreation SCUBA



## BULLYING, ABUSE AND SUICIDE

Commentary by Jeffrey Gay

The VA nurse to me, "Do you feel safe at home or have any concerns?"

I used to laugh and poke fun at that question, especially when my wife was along as I nudged her.

The nurse never seemed to have a sense of humor at that time.

Well, it is a valid question and should be asked more often, just to be sure... A person may feel safe at home now but in another month, year or more will the answer remain the same?

I've been in law enforcement and I currently work a side-job facilitating a domestic abuse program for court ordered abusers. Yes, it truly is a valid question.



Abuse, depression and everything else that goes with it is not gender specific an abuser may be either male or female. If not nipped in the bud it continues unchecked and can also be a hand-me-down issue. As children experience it in their home growing up it may seem to them to be normal and therefore may become abusers, or bullies, as they age passing the aggression on to their offspring.

stress failure  
anxiety depression  
anger

on to their offspring.

First of all this is truly unfortunate not only



Jackson County Veteran Service Office July 2019

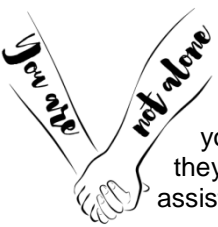
because of the pain, physically and mentally, it causes and the social implications with family & friends but also of the legal ramifications which may include incarceration, fines to pay, classes to attend, divorce and possible loss of custody of your children.



**NOW! THE REAL MEAT OF THIS ARTICLE!**

The other reason you are queried concerning your feelings is the concern that you're "OK" in-so-much-as your mental state. Life is tough and sometimes coping with it causes issues which may seem overwhelming.

You may not realize it at the time but because of these issues you may be subject to being a danger to yourself or others. They want to make sure that this is realized before anything drastic occurs.



**Don't "soldier up", be honest with them** as you answer the questions. You may not feel comfortable asking for help or you may not realize that you need help but through your answers they can determine if and how to offer assistance.

By doing so personal or domestic abuse, hurting yourself or others and suicide can be reduced.

*There are no "Do-over's" with Suicide!*

I had this happen yesterday at the VA CBOC. Something I said triggered a response and I was not allowed to leave until I spoke with a psychologist. It was probably the best thing to happen to me in recent weeks!

If you struggle with depression or personal issues it's good to have a person(s), a good friend(s), with whom you can confide and trust, a "sounding board", be reciprocal and you listen to them too. Since I've moved back here I don't have the interaction I had and have to rebuild these relationships.

Another thing I have done sporadically over the years is to journal my day's events. I begin with asking myself how I feel that day, "**Mad, Sad or Glad**". I then ask myself why I feel the way I do and become introspective to consider the causes or triggers. I follow up with writing down how I deal with this and whether or not I really have to. This means writing down the good things too! You should always be "*in search of the good stuff!*"



This is also a good place to make a list of things you want to do for yourself, a "bucket list" of sorts. Things that will make you happy and relax.

My mantra for any situation is to "**STOP, take a pause, think, and then do what's right!**"

Again, if you have a significant other or a close friend confide in them and work together.

**In any case, if you're feeling down, phone a friend!**  
Or call the **Veteran's Crisis Line** any time of the day or night at **888-273-8255** or text them at or text to "838255"

**Changes to Homestead Property Tax**

**Changes to the Homestead Property Tax Market Exclusion for Veterans with Service connected Disabilities for 70% or greater, 100% Permanent and total, and surviving spouses.**



**Veteran's with a Disability – What Changed?**

- *Application Date: Applications for the veteran's with a disability exclusion are now due by December 15. This is effective for the current assessment year. This application deadline is for qualifying veterans applying for the exclusion and surviving spouses applying for the exclusion.*
- *Extension for Surviving Spouse of a 100% permanently and totally disabled veterans: The time period for qualifying surviving spouses has been extended from 8 years to a lifetime benefit, effective this assessment year.*
  - *Spouses that are currently receiving the exclusion and new applicants will receive this lifetime exclusion.*
  - *There is no backdating allowed for this extension.*
  - *If a spouse received the exclusion in assessment year 2018, for taxes payable 2019 and the exclusion was removed because 2018 was their eighth year in the program, then the county should put the exclusion back on those properties for assessment year 2019. This is the only "backdating" that is allowed since the spouse is currently benefiting from the exclusion in the 2019 payable year.*
  - *The county does have the authority to request new applications for these types of properties, however it is not required.*

**What Did Not Change?**

- *The July 1st date for CVSO certification was not affected by new laws. The CVSO is still responsible for certifying the veteran's disability rating to the assessor by July 1 so that the veteran can continue to qualify for the exclusion.*
  - *The certification is only for those veteran's that are currently receiving the exclusion, not for initial applications.*
  - *Note: Initial applications are reviewed and approved by the assessor who is responsible for making the initial determination on the veteran's with disability exclusion.*
- *The requirements to qualify for the exclusion*

- The exclusion amounts – still \$150,000 and \$300,000
- The disability ratings – still 70 – 100% or 100% permanent and total
- The reasons for when a veteran and/or surviving spouse would no longer qualify for the exclusion

### **What Do I Need to Do?**

- Accept applications through December 15 for assessment year 2019
- Find the properties that expired in 2018 for the surviving spouse extension and put them back into the program with a lifetime extension, as long as all requirements are met
- Update any information or correspondence the county has drafted to reflect these changes

## **MONEY? IT CAN BE AN ISSUE!**



Making your dollars stretch can be a real pain in the, well, **OK, HECK!** It can also cause pain in your head as it weighs on you in both good times and bad... It's called **STRESS** and **WORRY**. The same things that can cause anger issues and fights with your significant other, much like the

article preceding this one.

**Most of us have been dealing with this** for our entire lives but for those who are really just beginning NOW is the time to begin practicing good money habits, this includes monthly budgeting and long-term financial planning. Generally this is often not a high priority when you just out of college or beginning a family.

**When you're young** most things revolve around the here-and-now, the Friday nights with friends, Saturday night dates, things to buy and so on! Swipes of the credit card are quick decisions and add up quickly. The end of the month comes and POW! there it is exponentially larger than what you thought!

**You need to plan ahead** and develop responsible spending habits and budgets. A budget does not restrict what you spend it only allows you to manage it better and know where you are financially day to day. Planning and saving for unforeseen emergencies is also something so many of us do not do.

**Here are a few suggestions** to help you prepare for your financial future.

- When Possible, Avoid Deferring Student Loans
- Don't Put Off Starting a 401(k)
  - You are going to want to retire someday...
- Avoid Running Up Unnecessary Credit Card Debt
  - Using a debit card allows convenience but limits your ability to "go wild"!
- Don't Forget to Map Out Your Spending
  - Prepare a budget!
- Don't Ignore Your Credit History
  - Check it often and make it a personal game to increase it as much as you can

**A great way to judge exactly** how much you spend is to take 2 day to a week and write down **EVERYTHING** you spend money on. When I say everything I mean just that. Not just your normal monthly bills but also that bottle of pop from the vending machine, the gasoline you buy **AND** the snack and pop you pick up as you pay for your gas. **ALL** snacks, meals and tips! A candy bar, other trivial expenses you incur. **WRITE IT ALL DOWN!**

**Once you have done this** for a day or two add it all up and you'll be surprised how much you actually do spend! This should be your **AHA** or **OH SH\*T** moment!

**Now put that all into your family budget**, that's what you have on hand to spend while trying to make ends meet. Is there anything you can do without from what you wrote down? Think about it.

**Remember**, even if you've already made some mistakes, it's not an indication that you can't be successful at managing your finances – as with anything else, it's just a learning experience that will make you that much wiser in the future.

***"Old habits die hard. I don't like spending money willy-nilly."*** ~ Jack McBrayer

## **MISSION ACT QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

Recently the VA implemented changes to their community care program under the VA MISSION Act. The changes included expanded eligibility for community care and a new urgent care benefit. As part of its outreach and engagement efforts, they have collected the top questions received from Veterans and provided answers to each one below. The goal is to make it easier to access care that you have earned.

### **General health care**

1. **When can I receive community care?**  
Eligibility for community care depends on your individual health care needs or circumstances. You should discuss community care eligibility with your VA care team to determine if you are eligible. Watch the video to find out more at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oggmhxj8QRk&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oggmhxj8QRk&feature=youtu.be).
2. **Can I get dental care through the MISSION Act?**  
Eligibility for dental services has not changed under the MISSION Act. You should talk to your VA care team about eligibility for dental services. For more information about dental care you can go on-line to [www.va.gov/health-care/about-va-health-benefits/dental-care/](http://www.va.gov/health-care/about-va-health-benefits/dental-care/).
3. **How does a community provider know I am eligible to receive community care?**  
If your VA care team has determined that you are eligible for community care and you chose a community provider, VA will send the provider a referral and authorization prior to you receiving care. You must receive approval from VA prior to

obtaining care from a community provider in most circumstances.

4. **I was authorized for community care under the Choice program. What happens now?**

The Choice program expired on June 6, 2019, and specific Choice eligibility for community care is no longer being used. If you were eligible for community care under Choice, you should speak with your VA care team or a VA staff member at your local VA medical facility about updated eligibility for community care. Go to:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9ac0FqO8To&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9ac0FqO8To&feature=youtu.be) and watch the video providing a quick primer regarding community care eligibility under the new Veteran community care program.

**Urgent Care**

1. **How do I become eligible for the urgent care benefit?**

You must be enrolled in VA health care and have received care through VA from either a VA or community provider within the past 24 months to be eligible for the urgent care benefit.

2. **How can I find an urgent care provider?**

To find an urgent care location in VA's contracted network, use the VA facility locator at [www.va.gov/find-locations](http://www.va.gov/find-locations). Select the link entitled "Find VA approved urgent care locations and pharmacies near you".

3. **What is the difference between urgent care and emergency care?**

**Urgent care** consists of medical services provided for minor illnesses or injuries which are not life-threatening including but not limited to:

- strep throat
- pink eye
- influenza.

**Whereas emergency care** consists of inpatient or outpatient hospital services that are necessary to prevent death or serious impairment of health including:

- severe chest pain,
- seizures or loss of awareness,
- heavy uncontrollable bleeding, or
- moderate to severe burns

4. **Do I have to pay a copayment if I receive urgent care that relates to my service-connected condition?**

Copayments for urgent care are different from other VA medical copayments. **Copayments for urgent care depend on your assigned priority group and the number of times you visit any urgent care provider in a calendar year.** You can visit the Urgent Care webpage at [www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent\\_Care.asp#Copayments](http://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care.asp#Copayments) for more information about copayments.

5. **How do I get prescription medication related to an urgent care visit?**

VA will pay for or fill prescriptions for urgent care. For urgent care prescription medication longer than a 14-day supply, the prescription must be submitted to VA to be filled. For urgent prescriptions written by an urgent care provider, you can fill a 14-day supply of medication **at a contracted pharmacy** within the VA network, in VA, or at a non-contracted pharmacy. If a non-contracted pharmacy is used, you must pay for the prescription and then file a claim for reimbursement with your local VA medical facility.

**SERVICE ANIMALS**



**We all see dogs who are leashed** and have the service animal vest on them in and around all over town from time to time. Probably some of you even have one of these caretakers... And we have to keep

in mind a service animal moniker is not reserved solely for that of a canine.

**Most of us understand the role they play** in a person's life who has one disability or another but there are still some who don't or just don't care.

**The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) defines** a service animal as "an animal trained to do particular tasks for a person with a physical or mental disability. These tasks must be connected to how the person is able to function. The service dog works to compound, support and assist these activities or mitigate the person's impairment."



**Service dogs may also be referred to as:**

- *Therapy or psychiatric dogs that help those suffering from psychological impairment or other emotional difficulties. These dogs can be found at hospitals or retirement homes*
- *Guide dogs or signal dogs that help people with physical and mental disability. A blind person, for instance, will need a service dog for his mobility. A person suffering from neurological disability, such as someone with PTSD, might need a signal dog to warn him or the people around him of triggers before these happen.*

**Service dogs are considered more than pets** because of these specific and important tasks they perform for their handlers on a daily basis.

**Any breed of dog can become a service dog**, but the distinction is not acknowledged for other animals, whether they are domestic or wild. This means cats, birds, monkeys, or any other animals are not allowed to be designated as a service animal by the ADA.

**For more information** you can go to the FAQ page at [www.ada.gov/regs2010/service\\_animal\\_qa.html](http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html)

## What of a place of business refuses me entry or service because of the animal?

If you have been refused service or have been asked to leave because of your service dog you can go to the authorities, however:

1. Your Service Animal must be identified as such
2. Your Service Animal must be wearing the approved vest identifying that it is a Service Animal



**NOTE: There are individuals and organizations that sell service animal certification or registration documents online. These documents do not convey any rights under the ADA and the Department of Justice does not recognize them as proof that the dog is a service animal.**

With all of the controversy lately concerning various types of animals being "certified" as Service or Therapy Animals you need to be cognizant of the actual definitions and restrictions. Any animal may be referred to as a Service or Comfort Animal but there are guidelines which must be adhered to. Be sure you know them and follow them to avoid any misunderstanding.

ADA also specifically prohibits cities, merchants and others from requiring proof that a dog is a service dog. It allows, in fact, only two questions, if an animal is a service animal and/or what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. Service dog owners may not be asked about the nature of their disability. They may not be required to provide documentation of the dog's training

You must also be a good neighbor and consider and understand any phobia's another person may have toward an animal as well as any allergies or perceived hygiene issues. Also be prepared to be responsible if the animal causes a disturbance or damage.

If you are not the owner of the service animal it is best not to pet, or even ask to pet, the animal while they are "on the job". While it is not "illegal" to pet a service dog, it is rude, incredibly inconsiderate and could put both the dog and the handler in danger. They spend at least two years in training and have to be allowed to focus on their person.

**How can you get a Service Animal?** To qualify for a Service Animal, all you need to do is get written documentation from your healthcare provider that you have and are being treated for an emotional or psychiatric disorder or disability and require the assistance of an animal because of it.

However, there is training to go along with the animal specific to your disability and the cost of the trained animal is generally quite high. Most insurance will not pay for it but there are organizations which may help you.

If you have specific questions you can go on-line to the official website for the ADA at [www.ADA.gov](http://www.ADA.gov)

**"If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking."**

—George S. Patton



**STRAIGHT FROM  
VETERAN'S HEALTH!**

## Six Ways to Combat Heart Failure

Reprint from VA HealthVet on-line

If you have heart failure, healthy choices are necessary. Congestive heart failure, or CHF, is a common chronic condition causing reduced ability of the heart to circulate blood. Often referred to as "heart failure," CHF often leads to fluid accumulation in the lungs and throughout the body, causing shortness of breath and an inability to exercise. While it's serious and has no cure, there are treatments VA recommends, such as lifestyle changes and medications, that can help reduce the symptoms of CHF, improve your heart health and overall well-being.

### What causes it?

Heart failure occurs when your heart can't pump oxygen-rich blood to all parts of your body as well as it should. **Certain conditions** can also worsen heart failure, including:

- Coronary artery disease
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Other heart conditions or diseases

### What are the symptoms of CHF?

While some people don't show any signs of CHF, others can experience these common symptoms:

- Shortness of breath with activity
- Shortness of breath when trying to lie flat
- Shortness of breath that wakes you up in the middle of the night
- A cough that won't go away
- Sudden weight gain
- Fatigue
- Lightheadedness
- Swelling, especially in the legs and abdomen
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Increased heart rate
- Heart palpitations

Chest pain can also be a sign of a heart attack. If you experience this or any other symptoms that may point to a severe heart condition, seek immediate medical attention.

## How can I treat it?

You can live a longer, more active life if you challenge yourself today. Start by making these lifestyle changes to manage and improve your heart health:

- *Limit the amount of sodium in your diet to 2,000 mg per day*
- *Stay physically active*
- *Reach or maintain a healthy weight*
- *Quit tobacco use*
- *Take your medications as directed*
- *Keep appointments with your medical provider*

In addition to making heart-healthy changes, your doctor may also recommend these medications. Depending on the cause of CHF, your provider may advise a procedure or surgery. The sooner you start taking steps to improve your heart health, the better chance you have of managing heart failure symptoms.

Each case may be different, so work with your health care team to find the treatment options that work best for you. Medications may need to be frequently adjusted to keep the symptoms of CHF controlled.

## Track and share your heart health progress

Your health care provider's treatment plan can help you manage or prevent CHF symptoms from developing. My HealthVet's **Track Health** feature makes it easy to monitor heart health and lifestyle changes, such as keeping track of your vitals and recording your food intake. If you have a My HealthVet Premium Account, you can use your **VA Blue Button** report to share your vitals with your physicians in or out of the VA system. If you don't have a Premium Account, you can create or upgrade your account now by going on-line to <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/>

## Target Your Anger with AIMS App

Reprint from VA HealthVet on-line

Online desktop or mobile options for using the VA anger control plan.



Anger is a natural emotion. Everyone gets angry from time to time. But it can be a problem if you get mad too often, too quickly, or too intensely. People who have experienced trauma or suffer from PTSD may find it difficult to control their temper. Many Veterans, even those who haven't experienced trauma, learned to adopt a quick, aggressive response as part of their military training. That response style can be very helpful in some situations, like combat, but can cause problems in civilian life. For some Veterans, that can make the transition to civilian life even tougher.

The good news is that anger is not a permanent part of your personality. The way you express anger is a learned behavior - that means you can retrain yourself to respond differently. VA has developed a free and confidential course **Anger & Irritability Management**

(AIMS) at <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/AIMS/>, to help you learn tools and techniques to manage anger and irritability better.

AIMS is different than anger management courses you may have tried. It is based on a highly effective treatment that was specifically designed for Veterans and Servicemembers. Thousands have improved their lives using this approach. AIMS doesn't try to convince you not to ever get angry. Instead, it teaches you to identify your triggers, notice the warning signs that you're getting irritated or angry, and use tools to manage your response.

## What will I learn?

The AIMS online program features eight modules, each containing videos from Veteran mentors who share their personal experiences and how the course helped them.

AIMS helps you better understand what makes you angry and gives you useful tools to manage what you do when you get annoyed or frustrated. Then you can develop a personal Anger Control Plan to help you continue to use what you've learned. Feel free to go through the course at your own pace, but it's recommended you complete 1 module each week. This should give you time to practice your new skills in between sessions.

**ANGER**  
is only one  
letter short of

**DANGER**

What is your motivation for wanting to change? Maybe you want to improve your relationship with family and friends, feel good about yourself, or better handle daily problems. Whatever your reasons are, keeping them in mind will help you succeed in this course and gain more control over your reactions.

## How can AIMS help me?

If you have trouble controlling your temper, **AIMS** can help. With this course, you can decide what tools work best for you and develop a personalized anger management plan. AIMS prepares you with real-world skills and tools to use daily. You can access AIMS through:

- **Desktop:** The online course is comprehensive with eight modules that build on each other. It's meant to be taken as a course. You can go at your own pace, but a module a week is recommended to give you time to practice the new skills you learn. It's free and anonymous - no login required.
- **Mobile:** The app can be used on its own, or in combination with the online course. It focuses on providing tools you can use in the moments you need them the most. It has plenty of educational content, and you can pick and choose what you want to use.

## What else can I do?

The bottom line: seeking answers won't hurt. But if this app isn't for you, and you still want help, take My

Jackson County Veteran Service Office July 2019

HealthVet's free online mental health **screenings**. Results are not recorded. You can choose to discuss your results with your health care team using **Secure Messaging** (*login required*) or bring them with you to your next appointment.

## **Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018 Update**

The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to strive to keep you informed of changes affecting your education and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits. On December 31, 2018, the Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-407) was signed into law. The law has five sections affecting the administration of GI Bill and VR&E beneficiaries' educational or training benefit.

Beginning on August 1, 2019, schools must have a policy allowing accepted GI Bill and VR&E students to attend a course of education or training if the beneficiary provides a certificate of eligibility or valid VAF 28-1905. The school must have a policy that does not impose a penalty, including the assessment of late fees, denial of access to school facilities, or require the beneficiary to borrow additional funds, because of delayed payments from the VA.

Educational institutions can require beneficiaries to provide:

- A certificate of eligibility, or VAF 28-1905 for VR&E, before the first day a program starts.
- A written request to use their GI Bill or VR&E benefits.
- Additional information necessary to properly certify enrollment.

If schools require these additional steps, VA will make that information available to existing and prospective students. VA is developing the process for collecting and providing this information.

If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact your counselor at your local VR&E regional office. You can find your closest VA regional office here [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp), or by calling **800-827-1000**.



"We're definitely being downsized."



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**

Army Times	<a href="http://www.armytimes.com">www.armytimes.com</a>
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>
Mil 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>

### **OTHER LINKS PROVIDING INFO AND ASSISTANCE!**

MACV (Fin/Legal)	<a href="http://www.mac-v.org">www.mac-v.org</a>
Minnesota LinkVet	<a href="https://minnesotaveteran.org">https://minnesotaveteran.org</a>
Wounded Warrior Proj	<a href="http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org">www.woundedwarriorproject.org</a>
LinkVet	<a href="https://minnesotaveteran.org">https://minnesotaveteran.org</a>

*"In the military, you learn the essence of people. You see so many examples of self-sacrifice and moral courage. In the rest of life, you don't get that many opportunities to be sure of your friends."*

—Adam Driver, Marine Corps veteran and actor (*Darth Vader – Star Wars*)



## MILITARY RECORDS DISPOSITION

When we were discharged we were all presented a stack of paperwork. Part of it was to sign as we processed out and the rest was ours to keep for our own records.



If you remember much about that day you remember that all you thought about was getting' outa there! Much like this guy you grabbed that stack and ran before they could change their minds!

**What did you do with it then?** Hmmmmmm... Good question. It's a "guy thing", in most cases we just stacked it in a corner and forgot about it. Others at least put it someplace safe for future reference and yet (a very few) placed it neatly in files or binders.

If suddenly you needed something from them and you were in that bunch who just stuffed them (or threw them into a "circular file") away you are in an "OH CRAP" mode. Here're are a couple of things to remember:

- 1) **Your Veterans Service Office** does **NOT** automatically receive copies when you process out.
- 2) **You were probably told** to take the discharge (DD form 214) to your local courthouse and file a copy. Did you do that?
- 3) **Ask your mom or your wife...** That's always worth a try...
- 4) **All's not lost...** You can request your records from the military archives! There are two ways to do that.
  - a. **Complete a Standard Form 180** (*Request Pertaining To Military Records*) and mail it to the appropriate office listed on the reverse side.
  - b. **Go to the National Archives** site on-line (*listed below*) and complete an on-line request. If you do this there is a signature page you will have to sign and mail in.



**What can you request?** You can ask for just your DD form 214 or you can ask for your entire OMPF (*Official Military Personnel Records*), your medical records (*which don't generally include individual sick call slips*), etc.

**The wait time varies** but you have to be patient as it generally will take 6 or more weeks to receive a response. If you look now and can't find them I would send a request so when you do need them you won't have that wait time. Usually when you need them it's urgent on your part, not theirs...

**Once you receive the copies** you request I advise that you find a good place to keep them safe for future reference. **Oh!** And file a copy of your discharge at your county courthouse! **There, you've been told for sure!**

To request your records on-line you go to [www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records](http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records). You follow the prompts and **ANSWER ALL** of the questions. **Easy peasy!**



The sergeant-major growled at the young soldier, "I didn't see you at camouflage training this morning."

The young soldier answered: "Thank you very much, sir."

## MILITARY KIDS!

When a military recruit signs the dotted line and raises a hand to swear the solemn oath, their service and sacrifice begins. Often unseen, but never forgotten, are the children who make those sacrifices, too. While Mom or Dad proudly serves, these 'little heroes' endure long deployments, extended training exercises and many of the stressors inherent in military life.



Minnesota Vikings Tight End Kyle Rudolph with a group of United Heroes League Military Kids

The **United Heroes League** (UHL) would like to honor these children with free sports gear, pro-sports tickets, access to free sports camps, and grants to cover the costs of sports association fees. UHL also provides once in a lifetime experiences to military families, including past trips to Super Bowl 52, the NHL All Star Game and in-person meetings with professional athletes.

**Any active service member or Honorably discharged Veteran who deployed to a combat zone (as defined by DOD or VA), with children under 18-years-old, are encouraged to apply.**

<https://unitedheroesleague.org/whos-eligible/>

To date, **United Heroes League** has provided over \$10 million dollars' worth of sports gear, tickets, camps and grants to over 40,000 military families across the U.S. 120 athlete ambassadors from six different sports and over 30 professional sports organizations have joined the UHL Team.

**Also for 2019, United Heroes League** proudly introduces UHL Outdoors. Military and Veteran families can join NHL All Star and passionate military supporter Steve Payne for one of eight nationwide fishing events. The service member or Veteran, and their child, will join Payne and a host of professional athletes out on the water for a memorable day of fishing.

"You have no idea how much joy it gave me to watch my son light up opening the box to his first pair of skates on his birthday! I have never seen him so happy. He immediately took off his shoes and tried to put the skates on in the kitchen. Thank you, thank you, thank you!" – Drew (USAF)



A Military Child goes fishing with UHL Outdoors

Jackson County Veteran Service Office July 2019

Based in Hastings, Minnesota, United Heroes League is a nationally registered 501c3 non-profit organization and maintains an average 90% giving rate.

To learn more visit [www.UnitedHeroesLeague.org](http://www.UnitedHeroesLeague.org), call at 651-319-0737, or [info@UnitedHeroesLeague.org](mailto:info@UnitedHeroesLeague.org).

Learn more about UHL's eligibility and prioritization at <https://unitedheroesleague.org/whos-eligible/>

*Disclaimer: The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products or services on the part of the VA.*

## **KEEP THE VA CURRENT!**

Moving? Taking an extended vacation? New phone number? Simply want VA to reach you at a different address? Whatever the reason may be, VA just made updating your contact information much easier.

First, Login to [VA.gov](http://VA.gov)

1. Login to [VA.gov](http://VA.gov)
2. Click on your name at the top right.
3. Select profile
4. Click on edit for anything you wish to change
5. Make your edits, and click update

However, this won't work for all VA databases...yet.

- For education benefits: Call 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (ET)
- For home loan benefits: Call 1-877-827-3702, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (ET)
- For Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance: Call the VA Insurance Center (VAIC) at 1-800-669-8477, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (ET)
- For prescriptions: Address updates via [VA.gov](http://VA.gov) will change your VA pharmacy, labs, appointment reminders, and postal mail from your VA medical center.

This new feature is one part of an improved, personalized digital experience. But it's also making a big, data-driven impact.

More than 17 million Veterans have contact information of some kind housed in Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) data centers, and 12 million Veterans in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) data centers. This data wasn't always up-to-date, and the systems did not talk to each other. Previously, a Veteran could have a different address at both, making it difficult for the VA to keep in contact.

Now, once the contact information is updated in one data center, it will be synchronized with VA systems across the country, including major VBA and VHA data centers. In fact, since deploying this new capability, VA has updated, cleaned up, or authenticated contact information for more than 2.4 million Veterans, ensuring that Veterans are being contacted faster, and where they want to be. **Does VA have your updated contact information?** Check now on [VA.gov](http://VA.gov).

## **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...

**FOR SUICIDE AND CRISIS!**



**OR TEXT TO "838255"**

**NATIONAL PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE**

1-800-522-4700



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

A soldier serving overseas was upset when his girl wrote to break off their engagement asking for her photograph back. He collected, from his friends, all the unwanted photographs of women that he could find, bundled them together, and sent them back with a note saying, "I regret that I cannot remember which one you are. Please keep your photo and return the others."

**HOW COPY? OVER...**

**GOOD COPY! OUT!**

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

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

*See y'all next month!*



The sole responsibility for content is  
Jeffrey Gay, Jackson Veteran's Service Officer.

As we stood in formation at the Pensacola Naval Air Station, our Flight Instructor said, "All right! All you dummies fall out." As the rest of the squad wandered away, I remained at attention. The instructor walked over until he was eye-to-eye with me, and then just raised a single eyebrow.

I smiled and said, "Sure was a lot of 'em, huh sir?"

**Jackson County Veteran Service Office July 2019**